A FORM CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PATRIARCHAL CULTIC LEGENDS

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Hugh C.layton White
Drew University
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List of Abbreviations

ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts
AS	Asiatischen Studien
BANE	The Bible and the Ancient Near East, G. E. Wright, ed.
BZAW	Beiheft zur alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CJT	Canadian Journal of Theology
ERE	Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
Ev.Th.	Evangelische Theologie
FAT	Forschung am Alten Testament, C. Westermann
GO	Gottes Offenbarung, W. Zimmerli
GR	Gottes Recht, F. Horst
Hex.-Syn.	Hexateuch-Synopse, O. Eissfeldt
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
JBR	Journal of Bible and Religion
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
Kl. Schrift.	Kleine Schriften, O. Eissfeldt
KS	Kleine Schriften, A. Alt
OG	Offenbarung als Geschicht, W. Pannenberg, ed.
RB	Revue Biblique
RGG	Religion im Geschichte und Gegenwart
St.Th.	Studia Theologica

ThLZ	Theologische Literatur-Zeitung
ThZ	Theologische Zeitung
ÜP	Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs, M. Noth
ÜS	Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien, M. Noth
ZA	Zeitschrift fur Assyriologie
ZAW	Zeitschrift fur alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Introduction

The theological significance of the motif of the "promise to the patriarchs" has been increasing in recent years, though there has been little agreement on many of the crucial critical problems connected with it. The passages in which this motif is expressed have been subjected to penetrating examinations from a number of different points of view: form criticism, history of religions, tradition history. The problem is certainly of sufficient complexity to require specialized study from each of these perspectives, but there is a very serious limitation which inevitably follows. When the horizon of the study is limited to what can be seen from the perspective of only one methodological approach, unnecessary conflicts and contraditions appear between the conclusions of these various studies. It has thus seemed advisable to bring together the results of these independent studies at this stage in the history of the research on this problem, and in so doing, to attempt to develop a coordinated methodological approach that can illuminate the problems from a broader perspective.

The basic approach of this study is that of a form analysis of the patriarchal cultic legends. Accounts which tell only of an act of worship at a cult site by a patriarch, but do not contain a promise (Gen. 13:18; 21:33), as well as those which may contain a promise but do not refer to a specific cult site or cultic action by the patriarch (Gen. 12:1-3; 26:1-5) are not to be classified as cultic legends. The former scarcely merit the title of "legend," and the latter do not have a connection with a "cultus." Thus the term "cultic legend" as it is used in this study refers specifically to those legends which contain an appearance of God usually at an identifiable cult site, for the purpose of giving a promise to the patriarch, and the response by the patriarch to that appearance. Within this general characterization of the cultic legend it is possible to distinguish three clearly different types, as will be shown in the form analysis below.

A consistent application of the form critical method requires the utilization of insights gained from other kinds of investigations. The Sitz im Leben must be investigated in order to determine where the form originated, and this entails a study of the religio-historical background. Then a consideration of the oral history through which a legend has passed is necessary in order to determine the origin of the variations in the form. It is thus necessary, before proceeding to the form analysis of the patriarchal legends, to investigate the religio-historical background of patriarchal religion and to summarize the history of the tribal movements leading up to the formation of the Israelite amphictyony. Since, however, both the religio-historical and traditio-historical aspects of this problem are subjects worthy of independent study, the treatment here cannot pretend to be exhaustive; the intention is only to provide a sufficient foundation to make possible a thorough application of the form critical methodology.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE INVESTIGATION

It becomes evident in tracing the history of the research on the book of Genesis over the past eighty years, that there is one constant and one variable factor which run through the whole. The constant factor is the application of the findings of religio-historical research to the task of interpreting Biblical religion. The variable factor is the methodology used to analyze the text. To refer to the former as the constant factor is to say only that the *use* of religio-historical findings by Biblical scholars has been constant, for within this specialized field of research many changes have occurred which have opened ever broader possibilities for conversation with Biblical research.[1]

The focus of this study will be upon the variable factor, the evolving critical methodology used within the field of Biblical studies. Since the methodology usually determines the extent to which the scholar can use the Biblical text as a reliable historical source, this is a question of primary importance. In terms of this study it is a question of the extent to which the critical methodology allows the cultic legends of Genesis to be used as a trustworthy source for determining the nature of pre-Yahwistic patriarchal religion. When this question has been answered, it will then be possible to move on to utilize the relevant religio-historical findings to interpret that religion and to determine its relation to the religion of Israel.

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[1] Cf. Mircea Eliade, "The 'History of Religion' as a Branch of Knowledge," *The Sacred and the Profane*, tran. by W. R. Trask (2nd ed.; Harper & Brothers, 1959), pp. 216-232; G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen; J.C.B. Mohr, 1956), pp. 788-798; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science, and Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1954), pp. 17-36.

As with so many other studies of the Old Testament, the investigation of the cultic legends of Genesis must begin with the work of Julius Wellhausen. The over-arching intention of Wellhausen's work was to write a scientifically accurate history of Israel and her institutions. To do this it was necessary to use the best available critical methodology in the analysis of his chief source document, the Old Testament. This was the literary critical method. The presupposition of this method was that the text could best be understood as the literary product of a number of authors and scribal redactors. But when these authors were dated many centuries after the events they were recording, as was frequently the case, the historical reliability of their records became very questionable. This was especially true of the account of the very ancient patriarchal religion found in Genesis.

Wellhausen is led to a consideration of the cult of the patriarchs early in his _Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels_[2] in connection with his examination of the place of the cultic service in the life of Israel. The holy places where the encounters between God and the patriarchs occurred, he believes, were originally old Canaanite cult sites which were in use long before Israel came into the land.[3] Thus they were not founded by the patriarchs as Genesis indicates. In other connections he goes on to point out that the picture of the cult of the patriarchs in Genesis has been so colored by the later authors of the source documents that it is now merely a reflection of the cult during the era of the Kingdom.[4] In Wellhausen's view then, only the faintest reminiscence of a pre-Yahwistic religion is retained in Genesis.

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[2] Julius Wellhausen, _Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels_ (6th ed.; Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1927).

[3] _Ibid._, p. 18.

Wellhausen's literary critical method set certain limits to his results. Believing his sources to be very late in origin he was forced into a radical scepticism regarding the historical reliability of the text. Though he was aware that the written sources had been preceded by a long period of oral tradition, his literary critical presuppositions led him to believe that the writer played the decisive role in the formation of the textual accounts. Any idea of the pre-Yahwistic religion of the fathers thus had to be derived altogether from extra-Biblical, religio-historical studies.

At this stage of the investigation the gap between the picture of patriarchal religion in Genesis and the probable nature of that religion was exceedingly great. Since Wellhausen's time a change in methodology as well as an improved understanding of the nature of religion in the patriarchal era, has brought about a considerable modification of his conclusions. His scepticism concerning the reliability of the text, however, should remain as a warning to those who would too quickly find the Genesis accounts confirmed by more recent archaeological discoveries.

With the work of Hermann Gunkel the methodological aspect of this investigation was taken decisively forward. In addition to the literary critical method of his predecessors, he made use of *Gattung* criticism which had as its intention the determination and separation of the basic units of the text which originated in oral tradition. This *Gattung* investigation produced a number of genres of legends whose basic form had been determined by their oral transmission. One of the most important of these genres was the cultic legend which explained the rites of worship observed in a holy place.[5] This is the genre with which this study is concerned.

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[4] "Die Erzählungen uber die Erzväter in der Genesis gehn von ethnologischen Verhältnissen und von Cultuseinrichtungen der Königszeit aus und leiten deren Ursprüng aus einer ideal Vorzeit her, auf die sie in Wahrheit nur abgespiegelt werden." Ibid., p. 94; see also, pp. 30-32, 322-331, 345-367.

Now that it could be shown that the cultic legend originated in oral tradition and was not the product of one of the early Israelite writers, the reliability of the picture of patriarchal religion found in the text was thereby increased. *Through form criticism the textual unit is brought much closer to the historical situation which it describes*. Gunkel was now able to say that these cultic legends could tell us much about the earliest religion of Israel as well as the nature of ancient religion as such.[6]

This means that the religion of the patriarchs reflected in Genesis antedates Yahwism,[7] and by a careful study of these materials one can come to an understanding of pre-Yahwistic religion. It is at this point that Gunkel makes use of the findings of the religio-historical studies in his time to elucidate the probable nature of this early religion. The question is whether the pre-Yahwistic religion reflected in Genesis is the religion of the Canaanites or of the patriarchs. This question is answered in part by an important distinction Gunkel made which has influenced all subsequent research on this subject.

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[5] Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (6th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1964), p. XXIII.

[6] ". . . diese Kultsagen sind unserer Hauptquell für die älteste Religion Israels. . . . Wir haben in diesen Sagen die Anfänge der Religionsgeschichte." *Ibid*., p. XXIV.

[7] *Ibid*., p. LXVIII.

He distinguishes between the legends that are related to various places in Canaan and those that are not localized. The latter are probably older, having originated in the period before the fathers migrated into the land.[8] The cultic legends are mostly mere "notices" or are clearly of later origin.[9] Most of them are associated with Canaanite cult sites, and it was not until the settlement of the land had begun that this identification probably took place.[10] This blurs the distinction between the nomadic and localized religion. It must be concluded, then, that the religion of the patriarchs before coming to Canaan must still be largely hidden behind the text. There is still a gap which Gunkel does not bridge between the cultic legends in the text and the original nomadic religion.

In addition, another gap exists between the cultic legend in the text and the specific life situation which gave rise to it. One of the major intentions of the form critical method is to get back to the Sitz im Leben where the Gattung originated. It is at this point that a certain imprecision enters Gunkel's work. While he says that the cultic legends explain ancient religious practices, he believes that the legend did not originate until a much later time, long after the religious meaningfulness of the place had disappeared, and it became necessary to explain why God and the patriarch were associated with it.[11] These legends were thus given for the most part in answer to the proverbial Kinderfragen. The imprecision arises at this point: there is no correspondence between the aetiological Kinderfragen and the form of the answer. Westermann has pointed out that the question about the category of aetiology is to be completely separated from the question about the type of narrative because an aetiological question can be answered in any number of ways—in a sentence, a long narrative, or a poetic saying.[12] When Gunkel has found the Sitz im Leben of the cultic legend to be the Kinderfrage, he has thus not begun to answer the question about the Sitz im Leben of the form of the legend itself. So if the form cannot be traced beyond the Kinderfragen, it is impossible to tell whether the legend actually originated in the patriarchal cultus, and thus whether it has preserved the content and form of the original legend and is a reliable source of information concerning the pre-Yahwistic patriarchal religion.

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[8] Ibid., p. LIX.

[9] Ibid., [illegible].

[10] Ibid., p. LXI.

[11] Ibid., p. XXIV.

Not being able to correlate the form and content of the legend with a specific cultic situation in the religious practice of Semitic nomads in the patriarchal era, he could only pick out certain general characteristics of the religion reflected in the text and try to correlate these with what he knew of primitive religion in general. His view of patriarchal religion is thus little more than a reiteration of the general evolutionary views of primitive religion prevalent in his day.[13]

So while Gunkel lessened the gap between the account of patriarchal religion in the text and the original situations where it was practiced, large gaps still remained: (a.) between the original cultus and the origin of the unit preserved in the text, and (b.) between the legend connected with a Canaanite cult center and the nomadic religion of the patriarchs. It remains for the former gap to be bridged by investigators who will reappraise Gunkel's form analysis and understanding of the Sitz im Leben of the cultic legends, and for the latter to be bridged by those who will develop a fuller understanding of nomadic religion. Gunkel's invaluable contribution is that he clearly set forth the proper methodology for this type of investigation: *form analysis of the genre* (or *Gattung*) *combined with the use of religio-historical knowledge to find the Sitz im Leben where the genre originated*.

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[12] Claus Westermann, "Arten der Erzählungen in der Genesis," Forschung am Alten Testament (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964), p. 40.

[13] Gunkel, p. LXVIII.

The next decisive step forward was made by Albrecht Alt in his now famous article, "Der Gott der Väter."[14] Recognizing the increased value of the text as an historical source made possible by form criticism, Alt intended to re-examine the text in the light of new historical information about the religion of ancient Semitic nomads to see if the text might contain a valid reminiscence of the pre-Yahwistic nomadic cult of the patriarchs.[15] Most of the previous attempts to describe patriarchal religion had failed to distinguish adequately between the religion of the patriarchs before and after entering Palestine. This always resulted in a confused picture of patriarchal religion since many features of the religion attributed to them were borrowed from the Canaanites. To eliminate this confusion between Palestinian and pre-Palestinian religion and to bridge the gap left by Gunkel between these two, Alt believes that it is necessary to inquire into the nature of religion connected with the earliest forms of social organization in Israelite society, i.e., the religion of the individual tribes and their sub-groups.[16] Since these tribes were nomadic, this inquiry leads back to the time before the tribes came into contact with the cult centers of Palestine. Though the text has been clearly imprinted with the religion of the land and of the later Yahwistic amphictyony, he believes that traces of the older authentic tribal religion can be found in the divine names associated with the patriarchs: the God of

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[14] Albrecht Alt, "Der Gott der Väter," *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlag, 1959), pp. 1-78.

[15] *Ibid*., p. 4.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 8.

Abraham, the Fear of Isaac, and the Strength of Jacob.[17]

Alt has found in the ancient Nabatean inscriptions extra-Biblical evidence for a tribal cult centered in the worship of a god of the fathers.[18] This is a god who has a special relation to the tribe. He is referred to as the "God of the Fathers" (or similar designations) and, in contrast to the sedentary gods of the Canaanites, this god moves with the migrations of the tribe.[19] He is bound to the tribe rather than to a place.

By carefully distinguishing between Palestinian-Canaanite religion and nomadic-tribal religion Alt has brought this investigation into a new phase. His skillful use of both Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence to support the contention that the central numen of this tribal religion was called the "God of the Fathers," constitutes a well-established starting point for all succeeding studies of patriarchal religion.

In his conclusions Alt goes on to discuss not only the type but also the content of patriarchal religion. This necessitates a consideration of the contents of the cultic legends. He contends that some of these legends are not localized and thus belong to the very old nomadic level of the tradition. They thereby contain some indication of the nature of this early religion. He finds the chief features of this religion to be the election of the patriarch and the giving of promises by the deity. The earliest of the promises is the promise of descendants, the primal concern of the nomad; then at a later time came the promise of land when the nomads were in the process of becoming sedentary.[20] It is these features of election and promise that provided the point of contact with the later Yahwistic religion which made the union of the two possible.

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[17] _Ibid_., pp. 25-26.

[18] _Ibid_., pp. 29ff.

[19] ". . . die Beziehung zu einem bestimmten Heiligtum spielt bei ihm keine Rolle. . . ." _Ibid_., p. 21.

[20] "Nach dem was sich uns oben in bezug auf den Religionstypus der Vätergötter ergeben hat, werden wir diese spezielle Verbindung des Erwählungsgedankens und der Verheissungsinhalte mit ihnen noch in den Werken

The discussion of patriarchal religion in recent years has all taken place within the framework of this description by Alt. But because Alt's concern was primarily with establishing the type of patriarchal religion rather than describing the content, further investigations have been made to explain more fully the nature of the religion itself. His work also had to be supplemented from the form critical viewpoint since he gave little attention to this aspect of the investigation.

The form critical side of this study has been carried further in the work of Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth. Both have accepted the positive conclusions of Alt concerning the nature of patriarchal religion.[21] It is the element of the promise in patriarchal religion that has been of greatest interest to both men, however. They have understood this element as the unifying motif in all of the patriarchal traditions and have attempted to see it in its larger traditio-historical connections.

Originally the promise of land referred to an imminent fulfillment for the tribe.[22] The localization of worship of the God of the Fathers in one of the temples in the cultivated land may have been regarded as the fulfillment of the promise.[23] In its present form, however, the insertion of the element of the sojourn in Egypt has pushed the fulfillment of the promise of land out into the future so that it now refers to land for the

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des Jahwisten und des Elohisten als eine richtige Erinnerung an den historischen Tatbestand betrachten dürfen." Ibid., p. 66.

[21] Martin Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1948), pp. 58-59; Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, tran. by D. Stalker, I (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), pp. 160-161.

[22] Martin Noth, Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960), p. 90; von Rad, p. 168.

[23] Noth, ÜP, p. 59.

whole nation.[24] Noth describes this change as a flowing together of the themes of the promise to the fathers with the "leading out of Egypt" and the "leading into the settled land."[25] In this way these traditions were subordinated to and unified by the promise and fulfillment scheme.

The form critical work of Noth and von Rad deals more with the question of the unifying motifs or themes, and the _Sitz im Leben_ of large bodies of tradition, than in the exact examination of the concrete _Gattungen_.[26] Their work also does much toward clarifying the traditio-historical process at work in the pre- and early Yahwistic periods. It does little, however, either to further the form critical study of the genres within these traditions or to expand the understanding of patriarchal religion found in Alt's writings.

A negative reaction to Alt's view of patriarchal religion has come from J. Hoftijzer.[27] He accuses Alt of assuming too quickly that there is an earlier stratum of tradition which is still distinguishable in the text, without first studying carefully the present context to determine the extent to which the earlier material has been adapted to present requirements. His method is to begin with the traditional source analysis, but then go on to determine the extent to which one source presupposes another. He also is interested in clarifying the historical situation presupposed by each segment of the tradition.

The conclusion of his analysis of the promises in Genesis is that they presuppose a period in Israel's history long after the patriarchal era, when Israel was already quite numerous and in possession of the land.[28] Furthermore, he does not find any conclusive evidence, either in the text or in Alt's Nabataean inscriptions, that there was a nomadic cult centering in the worship of the God of the Fathers. The apparent distinction in Ex. 3 and 4 between Yahweh and the God of the Fathers cited by Alt, does not stand up under closer scrutiny because this passage presupposes the identity of Yahweh and the God of the Fathers. It, therefore, cannot be used as evidence for the existence of a pre-Yahwistic cult.[29] The name, God of the Fathers, is rooted in the almost unbreakable continuity between generations and does not necessarily conflict with the name Yahweh.[30] Furthermore, he contends that Alt's evidence from the Nabataean inscriptions does not depict the religion of a nomadic tribe but only that of tribes who have already moved into the settled regions. Evidence is given of similar designations of divinity that were connected to places. So he concludes that a cult such as this would not necessarily have arisen in the wilderness but could have been connected to a place from the outset.[31]

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[24] _Ibid_.; von Rad, p. 169.

[25] Ibid., _ÜP_, p. 59.

[26] Cf. Noth's discussion of Ex. 32 in which he is concerned exclusively with traditio-historical questions and not at all with the form of the narrative, _ibid_., pp. 157-158.

[27] J. Hoftijzer, _Die Verheissungen an die drei Erzväter_ (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956).

Hoftijzer's conclusion is that the cult of the fathers did not originate in the nomadic period prior to the settlement of the land, but was from the outset a family religion of Israelite tribesmen connected with

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[28] "Zussamenfassend können wir sagen dass bei beiden Gruppen die Bilder der Vielheit des Nachkommenschaft benutz werden um die künftige Macht Israels zu betonen. In den Verheissungen des Landes wird das Fundament gelegt für das Volk und seine Religion." Ibid., p. 14.

[29] "Diese Identität weist im gegenteil darauf hin, dass der Gott der Väter zu einer Traditionsform gehört, in der die religiöse Einheit zwischen Väterzeit und Mosezeit vorausgesetzt wurde, und von religiöses Verscheidenheit nicht die Rede war. Die Diskrepans in Ex. 3:13 ist dann entstanden, weil diese Tradition mit einer andern verbunden wurde, die die Begegnung mit JHWH erst bei Mose anfangen liess und eine religiöse Verbundenheit mit vorhergehenden Geschlectern nicht kannte." Ibid., p. 86.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., p. 93.

Palestinian cult centers. No unalterable opposition was seen between Yahweh and the God of the Fathers, so that later in the history of Israel, at a time when the nation was threatened, this tradition was included to strengthen the nation's faith and her claim to the land.[32]

Hoftijzer's strict literary critical and traditio-historical approach has left many investigators unsatisfied. Claus Westermann has replied to Hoftijzer from a form critical viewpoint.[33] His intention is to determine whether there is a type of narrative to which the promise belongs as an inherent part. If it can be shown that there are such narratives and that these narratives originated in oral tradition during the nomadic period, then Alt's thesis about patriarchal religion will be strengthened and Hoftijzer's refuted. His conclusion is that the majority of the promises belong to a secondary stage of the tradition, as Hoftijzer contends, but that some can be found in the oldest levels. In Gen. 16 and 18 are narratives from the oldest level which center in the promise of the birth of a son. An old narrative which contains a promise of land as an integral part is found in Gen. 15:7ff.[34] He agrees with Noth that the promises originally referred to the immediate objectives of the tribe and were probably fulfilled during the patriarchal period.[35]

These narratives, according to Westermann, belong to a genre which has its Sitz im Leben in the family, and so he terms them "Familienerzählungen." It was in the context of the life of the family that they originated and were passed down orally for many generations. This means that in their earliest stages they were connected to the tribe or family and not to a cultic site. This confirms Alt's view of nomadic patriarchal religion.

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[32] Ibid., p. 51.

[33] FAT, pp. 11-34, esp. p. 17.

[34] Ibid., p. 32.

[35] Ibid., p. 33.

Westermann's position is between that of Alt and Hoftijzer. He agrees with Hoftijzer that most of the promises in Genesis are secondary additions, but his form critical study supports Alt's position by showing that the promise narrative is a genre with a Sitz im Leben in the family that goes back into the nomadic period of the patriarchs. He does not deal with the religio-historical question, however, and thus he does not answer Hoftijzer's contention that there is insufficient evidence that there was a nomadic religion centering in the God of the Fathers similar to the religion of the patriarchs in Genesis.

Additional religio-historical evidence of the existence of nomadic tribal cults similar to the patriarchal cult has been offered by Victor Maag.[36] He accepts Hoftijzer's criticism that Alt did not clearly prove the separation of the nomadic from the Palestinian traditions. But he thinks Hoftijzer has gone too far in rejecting all possibility of reaching this pre-Palestinian religion. Hoftijzer's very restricted traditio-historical approach must be supplemented by religio-historical and ethnological analysis.[37]

The comparative material which he offers is taken from a film documentary of a migratory Icelandic tribe named the Bachtieren. This tribe practices a type of patriarchal religion in which the tribe depends on the father for leadership and protection in their migrations. The father receives his guidance from divine revelation while smoking a water pipe.[38] The God who speaks to the father then goes with the tribe to its new home and is worshipped by the tribe after arriving. He sees in this religion a close parallel to the patriarchal religion of Genesis. This nomadic religion is a religion of the promise. It lives in the world of migration where men are almost always in the process of moving toward some new land. The nomadic god is to be clearly distinguished from gods of the agrarian peoples which are bound to a place and always involved in the cycles of nature.

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[36] Victor Maag, "Malkut Jhwh," Supplement of Vetus Testamentum, III (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960). For a more extensive description of the inner nature of patriarchal religion, see Maag, "Die Hirten Israels," Schweizerische Theologische Umschau, 28 (1958), pp. 2ff.

[37] Ibid., p. 140, note 2.

[38] Ibid., p. 138.

Evidence for the existence of such a nomadic religion in the patriarchal tribes of Israel is also to be found in the nature of this later Yahwistic faith. Embedded very deeply in the religious consciousness of the Hebrews is the awareness that they are people who have passed from nomadic to settled life. The memory of the old nomadic religion of the promise did not fade away as it did with so many other peoples, but rather, became normative for the nation's own religious self-understanding.[39] When the Hebrews moved into the land and came into contact with the religions there, they assimilated them to be sure; but in so doing they filled the forms with their own distinctive content. In place of the religious feeling of relatedness to the land has come the nomadic feeling of always being under way. This feeling of perpetual unrest and expectation so characteristic of Israelite religion is a carry-over from the nomadic religions of the fathers and offers good evidence for the prior existence of such a religion.[40] At this point Maag seems to be reversing Hoftijzer's argument by saying that the later Yahwistic faith presupposes the nomadic religion!

This is a valuable study in that it sheds more light on the nature of patriarchal religion from a religio-historical viewpoint, but it fails to deal adequately with the specific literary critical and traditio-historical problems in the text raised by Hoftijzer. Questions could also be raised about the validity of the comparison made between religion of the contemporary Icelandic tribe and that of the patriarchal tribes. So a gap still remains between the religio-historical approach and the approach which deals more exclusively with the problems of the text.

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[39] Ibid., p. 135.

[40] "An die Stelle des in jeder Hinsicht festen Sitzens in Lande war das nomadische unterwegsein der Seele getreten." Ibid., p. 153.

In the work of Walther Zimmerli and Rolf Rendtorff, the investigation is carried a step farther along the lines laid down by the previous research, but at the same time is given a new direction. The need which has emerged for a more precise form critical study of the text has been met in part by their work. They make use of the form critical method to examine some of the specific terms and formulae found in the cultic legends of Genesis. Whereas Westermann's work was focused upon a form analysis of the promise, Zimmerli and Rendtorff are more concerned with the terms and formulae connected with the appearance of God immediately preceding the promise. But these form critical studies lead them directly into a deep consideration of some very crucial issues in Old Testament theology rather than into a more precise examination of the nature of the patriarchal cultus in which these forms originated.

Rendtorff examines the cultic legends of Genesis in connection with his study of the concept of revelation in ancient Israel.[41] The focus of his interest is therefore on the meaning of the appearance of God indicated by the term נראה. This term is usually found in a superscription which is often very loosely connected with the remainder of the passage. Because of this loose connection with the promise which follows, and because this term is not used in later traditions, Rendtorff believes that the primary emphasis of these legends falls on the historical actions announced in the promise rather than on the divine appearance as such.[42] In a note he adds that the appearance of deity in a particular place is a typical element of the religion in the settled regions, whereas the promise is characteristic of the nomadic religion. It is the latter that has influenced the religion of Israel the most profoundly.[43]

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[41] Rolf Rendtorff, "Die Offenbarungsvorstellungen im Alten Israel," *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, ed. by W. Pannenberg (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961), pp. 21-41.

In the later traditions the appearance is supplemented or replaced by the self-presentation (*Selbstvorstellung*) of Yahweh ("I am Yahweh"). Even here, however, the emphasis does not fall on the presentation of the name as such. The name is rather intended to call to mind the past actions of God and to refer to his future activity. It stands for the power of God revealed in his historical activity both past and future, rather than being an object of knowledge in itself.[44]

The initial form critical work on the self-presentation formula was done by Zimmerli in 1953.[45] In this work he called attention to the close relationship between the name of God and his historical activity.[46]

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[42] ". . . dass Gewicht mehr und mehr von der sinnfälligen Erscheinung, der manifestation Jahwes, weg auf die Ankündigung seines Handelns verlagert." *Ibid*., p. 25.

[43] "Die Erscheinung der Gottheit an einem bestimmten Ort ist ein typisches Element der Kulturlandreligion----die Verheissung an einen bestimmten Menschen ein ebenso typisches nomadisches Element. Dieses letztere hat aber die Überlieferung entscheidend theologisch geprägt." *Ibid*.

[44] *Ibid*., p. 33. In specific reference to the brief "I am Yahweh" as it is used in Deutero-Isaiah, he says, "Der Name . . . ist vielmehr prägnanter Ausdruck für den Machtanspruch, für all das, was sonst entfaltet wird. . . . Die Kurzform stellt also hier die letzte prägnante Zusammenfassung des Machtanspruchs Jahwes dar." *Ibid*., p. 34.

[45] Walther Zimmerli, "Ich bin Jahwe," *Gottes Offenbarung* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), pp. 11-40. See also, "Erkenntnis Gottes nach dem Buch Ezechiel," *ibid*., pp. 41-119.

[46] *Ibid*., p. 20.

Rendtorff, however, has pointed out what he regards as an inconsistency in Zimmerli's article. Elsewhere in the same article Zimmerli explains the meaning of the self-presentation of God as being the revelation of a previously unknown deity in which the deity presents his name to the person involved for the first time.[47] Rendtorff sees an inconsistency between Zimmerli's stress on the name of God as a sign referring to the past and future activity of God in history, on the one hand, and his stress on the name as something to be communicated for its own sake as a sign of the personhood of God, on the other.[48] Zimmerli has replied to Rendtorff with a criticism of the latter's understanding of the event-character of revelation.

Zimmerli does not find any objection to Rendtorff's understanding of the cultic legends as a combination of Canaanite and nomadic religions but sees a theological issue that goes beyond the religio-historical dimension of the problem. Beyond the question of the presence of Canaanite and nomadic elements in the cultic legend one must ask: Does Yahweh reveal himself to his people in connection with the announcement of his promise or in the action that is announced in this word?[49] Zimmerli answers this question by explaining the significance of the name and word of God as means of revelation. With reference to the self-presentation of Yahweh in Deutero-Isaiah he says that the name of God represents the "hidden selfhood"

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[47] "Ein bisher Ungenannter tritt aus seiner Unbekanntheit heraus, indem er sich in seinem Eigennamen erkennbar und nennbar macht. Das Gewicht liegt auf der Nennung des Eigennamens Jahwe, der in sich die Fülle und volle Ehre des sich Nennenden enthält." GO, p. 11. See also, p. 32.

[48] Rendtorff, pp. 32-33, and note 16, p. 33.

[49] "Offenbarung im Alten Testament," Evangelische Theologie, Vol. 22 (1962), pp. 15-31, esp. p. 21.

(*Ich-Geheimnis*) of God. When the name of God is spoken it carries with it the meaning that God is the transcendent subject of all his historical activity. The name is not just a bare symbol for the power of God but is a word which reveals his individual personhood.[50] Through the word, this transcendent God addresses man and reveals himself by announcing his forthcoming historical actions.[51] He believes that Rendtorff, by making the event into the locus of revelation, has devalued the revelatory character of the word and consequently made the revelatory event an encounter with sheer power rather than with a person.

Rendtorff has replied by asserting that he is not attempting to separate the appearance and disclosure of the name and word of God from the historical revelatory event, but he does see the danger in over emphasizing it as he believes Zimmerli has done with his emphasis on the *Ich-Geheimnis*.[52] His intention, in fact, is to clarify what he thinks is the inseparable relation between word and event.[53] It is nevertheless clear that, for him, the event is the real locus of revelation since he finds in the historical writing of the Old Testament, revelatory events that are not clearly preceded by an announcing word. But even there, he recognizes that the revelatory event is preceded by a distinctive Israelite understanding of history that in some sense functions as a pre-understanding in place of the foregoing announcement.[54]

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[50] "Denn das Aussagen des Namens ist, wie schon gesagt, nicht eine Prädikatsaussage, in der von einem Subjekt "Ich" etwas Prädizierendes, Beschreibendes ausgesagt würde, was dann als nähere Kennzeichnung jenem beigefügt werden kann, sondern es ist eine Aussage der Selbst erschliessung, ein Revelationswort, in dem das Ich in seinem Ich-Charakter sich erschliesst." *Ibid*., pp. 21-22.

[51] *Ibid*., pp. 28-29.

[52] "Geschichte und Wort im Alten Testament," *Ev*. *Th*., Vol. 22 (1962), p. 627.

[53] *Ibid*., p. 622. Also, "Auch hier sind das ankündigende Wort und das Geschehen, in dem sich das Wort verwirklicht, nicht voneinander zu trennen. Erst der Wort-Geschehen-Zusammenhang als ganzer wirkt Erkenntnis Jahwes (vgl. *OG*, pp. 35ff.)." *Ibid*., p. 627.

The name of God likewise comes before the revelatory event. It accompanies the word of promise to make it clear that it is indeed Yahweh who is speaking and who consequently will act in the future. But the name primarily serves to establish the continuity between God's past and future historical activity. Nothing is revealed in the name itself.[55] He thus believes that Zimmerli's interpretation of the name of God as signifying the transcendent subjectivity—the *Ich-Geheimnis*—of God which man encounters in the announcement of his word gives greater importance to the function of the name in the revelatory event than can be justified.[56]

At this point is should be noted that this debate has moved from the plane of religio-historical and form critical studies to that of Old Testament theology. It is now a question of what the cultic legends of Genesis have to say about the relationship between God in his transcendent personhood and the historical events which reveal his glory and power to man. The former aspect is indicated by the appearance of God and the self-presentation formula (for a detailed analysis see below), and the latter by the promise which speaks of the future deeds of God. From a religio-historical viewpoint this is the problem of the relationship of the religion of Palestine found at the various cult centers with nomadic religion, or the relation of the religion of epiphany and appearance with the religion of the promise.

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[54] *Ibid*., p. 636.

[55] ". . . diese Wendungen wollen ja alle betont herausstellen, dass es eben Jahwe und kein anderer ist, von dem hier geredet wird. . . . Aber sie wird eben nicht nur punktuell 'je und je' in der Verkündigung des Namens erfahren, sondern sie erweist sich in der Continuität des Handelns Jahwes, das im Aussprechen seines Names immer wieder vergegenwartigt wird." *Ibid*., pp. 627-628, ftn. 16.

[56] *Ibid*., p. 629, note 16.

The more precise theological problem involved here is that of the relationship between the word of God adn the action of God as means of revelation. Zimmerli, by placing his primary emphasis on the speaking subject, the "I", stresses the primacy of the word. In the event of speaking, God "appears" to man and in his speech reveals himself—though to be sure man's knowledge of God is not complete until after the historical actualization of the word. Rendtorff, by placing primary emphasis upon the historical event as the place where God reveals himself in power and glory, stresses the importance of the action of God in history. The conflict between these two interpretations arises from their divergent ways of conceiving of God: for Zimmerli, God is conceived in terms of his *personhood* (*Ich-Geheimnis*) and for Rendtorff, in terms of *power*. The *word* (the name of God as well as his promise) is an outward expression of the transcendent "Ich" for Zimmerli, and a foreshadowing of the revelatory historical event for Rendtorff. The question, then, is whether the word has actually been overshadowed and devalued in the work of both men by abstract concepts of God which are made the bases for their interpretations. Is it not possible to understand the revelation of God altogether within the horizon to the word of promise?[57] Is it not possible that the Biblical category of the word of promise may include within itself the proper understanding of both the transcendent personal freedom of God and the disclosure of his might in history?[58] This is the over-arching theological question with which this study must be concerned.[59]

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[57] "Erkenntnis Gottes vollzieht sich darum nicht angesichts eines transzendenten Über-Ich und auch nicht angesichts eines dunklen Gesichtsverlaufes, sondern angesichts des geschichtlichen Handelns Gottes im Horizont der Verheissungen Gottes." Jürgen Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1965), p. 105.

[58] "Das Verständnis der Verheissung muss beides, den personalen und den geschichtlich-sachlichen Wahrheitsbegriff, verbinden." *Ibid.*, p. 108.

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A summary of the history of the investigation will show the next steps which must be taken in order to move beyond the impasse reached in the investigations of Zimmerli and Rendtorff.

The original question with which this study began concerned the possibility of reconstructing an idea of the patriarchal religion from the accounts of it in the book of Genesis. Using the literary critical method, Wellhausen had to give a negative answer to this question since he discovered that the author of the text, whom he believed played the decisive role in its formation, lived many centuries after the events he recounted and simply read the religious situation of his own time back into this early period. With the advent of form criticism in the work of Gunkel the role of the author changed from that of a creative writer to a collector and arranger of oral traditions. These traditions themselves were considered to be very old, having originated in some cases not long after the events recounted in them and often possessing some historical reliability. The use of form criticism thus raised the possibility that the text itself contains some genuine traditions of the patriarchal religion. Gunkel himself, however, did not trace these religious traditions back to their original _Sitz im Leben_ in the patriarchal cult, but rather made the mistake of thinking that the situation of the _Kinderfrage_ sufficiently answered the question about the origin of the form. This left a gap in his work between the cultic legend and the original situation where it was given its characteristic form. A further gap arose between the text and the original situation in life when Gunkel pointed out that the oldest legends of Genesis were not connected with a place but originated in the time when the tribes were still wandering nomads. Since almost all of the cultic legends are connected with places in Palestine, this meant that little could be said with certainty about the religious traditions of the patriarchs before entering the land.

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[59] More recently two works have been published which approach these problems from the viewpoint of the theophany in the Old Testament: Jörg Jeremias, *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965); and J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967). Both works intend to apply the form critical method to the study of Old Testament passages containing "theophanies," and in so doing, help to meet the need which arose with Gunkel for a more exacting form analysis of such passages. Of the two, however, only Kuntz deals with the theophanies in Genesis, and he deals with them only in a very general fashion. Rather than elucidating the variety of concrete forms of the textual units containing "theophanies," Kuntz is interested in showing how all of these passages are actually variations of *one Gattung*; the theophany, which runs all the way through the entire history of Old Testament literature. In light of the fact that the word "theophany" is of Greek rather than Hebrew origin (p. 30), and that there is in the whole of the Old Testament only *one* example which he can cite of the "theophanic" *Gattung* in its "pristine expression," Gen. 26:23-25 (p. 59), this *Gattung* would appear to be an artificial construction. This seems especially true in light of the fact that Kuntz does not correlate the *form* of the *Gattung* with the structure of a known cultic ceremony. He is more interested in nature of the theophanic *appearance* in the cult and the human *experience* that resulted from this (pp. 221ff.). This means that the reconstructed form is, by and large, a compilation of various elements taken from a great many different passages, which does not correspond to any identifiable cultic *Sitz im Leben*. That such a *Gattung* ever existed concretely over a period of time has thus not been shown by the author. His interpretations of the meaning of "theophany" as essentially a *hieros logos* finds support in the work below, however.

Subsequent research on this problem can be divided into two parts: that which has attempted to correlate the increased understanding of the religion of Semitic nomads with the picture of patriarchal religion in Genesis—Alt and Maag—and that which has attempted to determine more precisely the tradition history of the cult legends—Noth, von Rad, Hoftijzer—and their form—Zimmerli, Rendtorff, Westermann. These two groups correspond to the two gaps left in Gunkel's work.

This has resulted in a dispute over the legitimacy of reconstructing a picture of patriarchal religion on the basis of extra-Biblical comparative religious documents apart from considering carefully the traditio-historical problems of the text(Hoftijzer against Alt, with an answer by Maag which supplies more comparative material but does not adequately answer the basic objection of Hoftijzer), a traditio-historical analysis of the text which does not take form criticism into consideration (Hoftijzer's method as opposed to Westermann's), and form critical studies which focus on only part of the cultic legend and deal with the question of the Sitz im Leben only in a very general way (Zimmerli and Rendtorff). In view of the lack of coordination of research methodology it is not surprising that a theological dispute should arise at the end of this period of investigation which revolves around the central problem: the relation of nomadic religion to the religion practiced in the Palestinian cult centers. Westermann, by analyzing the cultic legend as a whole and seeking to find its original Sitz im Leben in the family or tribe, has pointed the way for subsequent research to go. It can be said in summary that before the theological problem can be clarified it will be necessary to subject the cultic legends of Genesis to a methodologically coordinated investigation which: (a.) makes a thorough form analysis of the whole cultic legend, (b.) traces the history of the oral unit back to its tribal origins to determine the stages of interpretation through which it has passed, (c.) searches for the specific Sitz im Leben of the form in tribal religion making use of available religio-historical studies dealing with the religion of Semitic nomads. Because the final form of the text cannot be properly explained without the knowledge of its Sitz im Leben and tradition history, it will be necessary in this presentation to give this background before proceeding to the form analysis.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIO- AND TRADITIO- HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. The Religio-historical Background

The basic question which has arisen out of the history of research on the cultic legends of Genesis is whether it is correct to make an absolute distinction between nomadic religion and religion practiced at the ancient cult sites of Canaan.[1] In terms of the present form of the cultic legends, it is the question of the relation of the element of the appearance of God to the element of the promise. Further study of this problem should move in the direction indicated by Alt who showed the necessity of examining the type of religion peculiarly related to nomadic tribes and by Westermann[2] who pointed out the relationship between the form of the patriarchal narratives and their Sitz im Leben in the nomadic family or tribe. This study will carry the research one step farther by making a thorough analysis of the form of only one genre, the cultic legend, and determining its specific Sitz im Leben in the religion of nomadic tribesmen. Studies in the religion and culture of ancient Semites will be used as sources for information concerning the nature of the nomadic tribal cultus.

The search for the Sitz im Leben of the cultic legends must begin by indicating their characteristic features. Though there are numerous variations, there are three general elements which are found in almost all of them: (1) the appearance of the deity in some form, (2) the giving of a promise or blessing, (3) the response of man.[3] The first two elements are inadequate points of departure for this search because they are intangible utterances which presuppose a setting but do not necessarily contain any specific information about that setting. The most concrete of these elements is the last, the response of man, because it frequently contains a concrete action. Since an action in this context can usually be understood as a cultic or ritualistic action, it is here that the best evidence is given concerning the nature of the cultic situation out of which this genre developed.

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[1] "Nomadic religion" here refers to the religion of those groups which maintained a tribal identity in contrast to those which became identified with villages or cities, i.e., those which derived their identity from their geographical location. There would thus be no fundamental distinction between nomadic and semi-nomadic groups.

[2] FAT, p. 59.

Some of these responses, however, must be excluded from consideration at the outset for various reasons. In Gen. 17, the response of man is the rite of circumcision which, though a cultic action, is a reflection of the later religious rites of Israel. The response of Hagar in 21:14ff. is her obedience to a specific command of the angel. This does not seem to constitute a cultic action. In Gen. 15:1ff., 15:7ff., and 18, which constitute a sub-genre, as will be shown below, the response of man is verbal and has been included in the form of the narrative. No concrete cultic actions are in evidence here. All of the remaining passages conclude with either the giving of a name to the place (or to the deity) where the deity has appeared, or the building of an altar, or both. Both of these elements have their roots in very ancient religious practices. The religious act of naming places or gods, however, does not provide any information about the specific cultus, but must be understood in the light of the meaning of holy names in the ancient world in general. (See below, Ch.III, A, 1., c.) It is the rite of altar building that is both a very ancient religious rite among Semitic nomads—by no means a mere reflection of later Israelite religion—and a very concrete action that can provide specific information about their cultus. Thus it is with the rite of altar building that this search for the Sitz im Leben must begin. This is an appropriate point of departure since the narratives containing this rite are the most clearly connected with cultic sites. The possibility is not excluded, however, that other narratives not containing this rite may have originated in a different ceremony in the cultus.

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[3] These brief notices such as Gen. 13:18 and 21:33 which tell only of a holy act on the part of Abraham do not fall under the purview of this study because they do not mention an appearance of Yahweh. They are thus not primary cultic legends. Examples of the type of legend containing these three elements are Gen. 12:7ff., 15:1-6, and 28:10ff. Gen. 12:1ff. does not come into consideration because elements 1 and 3 are missing. There is thus no indication that it was a "cultic" legend.

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1. Altar Building in Genesis

In order to study the meaning of the rite of altar building in Genesis it is necessary first to explain exactly what is meant by this phrase. This will be done by designating the specific nouns used in this connection in Genesis and the various verbs which take these nouns as their objects.

The central object at the cult site could be termed either a "heap" (גל), a "pillar" (מצבה), or an "altar" (מזבח). The first of these is used in Genesis only in connection with the agreement made between Jacob and Laban at Mizpah in Gen. 31:46, 47, 48, 51, and 52. The making (literally the collecting, with לקט) of this heap is more what would be called today, a legal action than a specifically religious one. The heap of stones made by Jacob is intended to serve as a witness to oaths which the two men are exchanging. Still, the presence of God is also required to witness the proceedings (vs. 50) so that he may watch over each party in the future to see that they keep their word (vs. 49). Presumably the "heap" would also remain as a reminder to both parties of the oath sworn at this place. A meal is also shared by both men as a part of this procedure. The important thing to note here is that the making of a heap of stones was part of the procedure connected with the exchanging of oaths, and that the presence of deity was required at such a time and place to witness the event.[4]

The word, pillar (מצבה) is used in the same context in Genesis 31:45, 51 with the verb, to lift up (רים). The pillar is a large stone that is usually made to stand upright to be a marker or religious symbol. In this passage its function is exactly the same as the heap—i.e., to serve as a witness to the exchanging of oaths.

The pillar, in contrast to the heap, is used a great deal in purely cultic contexts. In the book of Genesis it is used to refer to the monument erected by Jacob at Bethel during his initial journey east of the Jordan (28:18, 22 with the verb שׂים), and in the later passage (35:14 with the verb יצב). In both passages the ritualistic nature of the event is indicated by the pouring (יצק in 28:18 and 35:14) of oil on, or the anointing (משׁח 31:13) of the pillar.[5] Otherwise in Genesis it is used only with reference to the grave marker placed by Jacob over Rachel's tomb between Bethel and Bethlehem (35:20 also with the verb יצב). In the latter case it would seem to have a function similar to a heap (Josh. 7:26). The function of the pillar in the other passages is not made clear by the text. But the act of anointing the pillar probably indicates that it represents the deity.

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[4] The term "heap" in later Israel is never used in exclusively cultic context. It is used to refer to a grave marker in Josh. 7:26, 8:29, and II Sam. 18:17.

[5] Cf. Ernst Kutsch, Salbung als Rechtsart (Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1963), pp. 7f., 9f.

The most important of these words is "altar" (מזבח). It is always used in Genesis in a cultic setting. The most frequent usage is in a standard phrase as the object of the verb בנה , "and X built an altar there (to Yahweh)."[6] With the exception of 35:7, all of these occur in connection with the Abraham and Isaac traditions. The remaining occurences are found in the Jacob traditions as the object of the verb יצב in 33:20 (at Shechem) and of עשׂה in 35:1 (at Bethel). All of these passages connect one of the patriarchs with a well-known cult center in Canaan. Because of the use of the altar as the object of the verb עשׂה in later priestly tradition (Ex. 27:1; 30:1; 31:8, 9; 35:15, 16: 37:25; 38:1, 30), 35:1 probably belongs to a later phase of the tradition than those passages using בנה ,[7] though this would have to be confirmed by a further study of the remainder of this passage.

In conclusion it can be said that the word, altar, is always used in a cultic context in Genesis, and when it is the object of a verb it is usually the verb, to build, בנה. The specific meaning of altar building in these passages is not at all self-evident. The word, pillar, is also found most often in a cultic context as the object of the verbs, to place, שׂים , and to set up, יצב . In these passages as well, the meaning of altar building and the function of the altar in the cultic event are not explained by the text. It would seem, however, that in both

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[6] Gen. 8:20; 12:7, 8; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 35:7.

[7] "Altar" is not found again as the object of the verb יצב , so it is difficult to determine its tradition level. It is used with "pillar" in P material (35:11), E material (35:20), and in D (II Sam. 18:18; II Kings 17:10). These occurrences are too few to permit the exact determination of age.

Gen. 28 and 35, the pillar in some sense represents the presence of deity. This will have to be established through further study of the individual texts, however. In 35:20 it functions as a grave marker. The word, heap, is used only in one passage—the account of the settlement of the dispute of Jacob and Laban at Mizpah. Pillar is also used in the parallel account of this event. Whereas the function of the altar in the cultic legends containing the patriarchal promises is not evident, in this narrative it is perfectly clear. The heap of stones, or pillar, is to serve as a witness to the oaths which are sworn by each man and as a permanent marker to remind each party of the conditions of the oath.[8] The problem now is to determine the ritualistic function of the altar in the specifically cultic legends in order to discover the cultic rites that could have created their form.

2. The Nature of the Evidence

In attempting to determine the life setting where the cultic legends of Genesis originated it is necessary to make use of comparative material from extra-Biblical sources because one is not certain of the extent the later tradition has colored the Biblical material. The crucial question then becomes: What kind of extra-Biblical material can be validly used to illuminate the patriarchal religion? It is necessary at the outset, therefore, to explain the nature of this comparative material and the extent to which it can be validly used to illuminate the original patriarchal cult.

The two major extra-Biblical sources of information about patriarchal religion are, in general, cultural anthropology and archaeology. During the latter half of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century anthropological studies of Semitic culture produced a number of extremely important works.[9] The focus of these investigations naturally fell upon the tribal culture of Semitic nomads since archaeology had only just begun to open up the ancient civilizations in Egypt and Mesopotamia for the historical scholar. Perhaps one could view the study of Israel's life and culture by Johannes Pedersen as the high point of this stream of investigation. Here one finds the culture of Israel sensitively portrayed from the viewpoint of Semitic mentality.[10]

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[8] Cf. W.O.E. Oesterly and Theodore H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (New York: Macmillan Co., 1940), p. 46.

The increasing significance of archaeological discoveries in the last years of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century has tended to draw attention away from Semitic studies to the investigation of the major centers of civilization in the ancient Near East—Egypt, Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Asia Minor. One of the earliest and most important studies of the history and religion of Israel which makes full use of archaeological discoveries is W. F. Albright's, From the Stone Age to Christianity.[11] In this work the major extra-Biblical sources of information about nomadic tribal culture and religion shifted completely away from the studies of Semitic nomads to the investigations of ancient Canaanite religion and the records of ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations. This is illustrated in Albright's discussion of patriarchal religion by his almost exclusive concern with correlating the names of the patriarchs and their gods with the names found in various ancient Near Eastern texts.[12] This probably was a consequence of his "organismic" approach which attempts to deal with history in terms of separate periods and cultural units in order to avoid reading foreign conceptions and ideas from later periods back into a given cultural situation.

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[9] Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, n. d.); Rudolph Smend, Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte (Freiburg and Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr, 1893); William Robertson Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1927); W. W. Graf Baudissin, Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte, Vols. I and II (Leipzig, 1876); also, Alfred Jeremias, Allgemeine Religionsgeschichte (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1918).

[10] Johannes Pedersen, Israel, its Life and Culture, Vols. I, II, III, and IV (London: Oxford University Press, 1946). Further studies in the sphere of Israelite institutions and thought forms have in various ways gone beyond Pedersen's seminal work; cf., Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel (N. Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1961); T. Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960).

[11] W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940).

While admitting the desirability of Albright's approach, there are certain practical limitations which must be recognized. Archaeology has to rely upon the recovery and analysis of enduring cultural remains, and nomadic culture is characterized by the almost total absence of such remains. Though much can be learned indirectly about their patterns of life and their deities from occasional references to them in records left by sedentary cultures, it is very difficult if not impossible to describe the inner nature of tribal life and the tribal cultic rites on the basis of these very brief and general references. At this point archaeological findings must be supplemented by the study of cultural anthropology.

The question which arises at this point is the extent to which these older investigations of Semitic tribal culture are still valid sources for the study of ancient nomadic religion. Most of them are based on primary sources which go back no further than the 5th century A.D. In many cases first hand reports of men who observed Semitic tribal life in the latter half of the 19th century are used as sources. In evaluating them one must certainly take into consideration the influence which the great religious and historical movements in the Near East have had on tribal culture. The greatest of these influences is, of course, Islam, which gave religious, and at times, political unity to the Semitic peoples. One of the most conservative aspects of every society is, however, its religious institutions. Even when new religions come into existence they make use of established cultic rites as evidenced in Christianity's appropriation of Roman religious festivals. This was especially true of the religious practices of the individual nomadic tribe whose basic way of life apparently changed very little from very ancient times down to at least the end of the 19th century. Albright himself believes that the way of life of the ancient Amorite tribesmen is comparable to some types of modern Middle Eastern nomads.[13] The major distinction he sees between the life of the ancient tribe and that of the modern Arab, Bedu, is that the modern tribesman uses the camel as his chief means of travel, whereas, in the time of the patriarchs the camel had not been domesticated to any great extent. This means that the modern nomad is probably much more nomadic than his ancient predecessor.[14] The tendency of these later sources would be to present nomadic religion as being less closely connected with permanent cult sites than true patriarchal religion. In terms of this study, however, this bias could be advantageous in that whenever there is a localization of the Arabian tribal religion one can be assured that a similar localization would have been possible in the religion of the less nomadic patriarchal tribes.

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[12] *Ibid*., pp. 184ff. It is also noteworthy that the works of J. Pedersen are not cited outside Albright's discussion of the history of the investigation, and those of W. R. Smith, only once outside of that section.

It should also be added that where these studies of ancient Semitic religion make use of outmoded evolutionary conceptions of primitive religion, they cannot be followed. But insofar as they present accurate phenomenological descriptions of the religion and culture of these peoples and contain interpretations that have been supported by later investigations, they remain as valuable sources. So, in order to speak more specifically about the original life setting of the patriarchal cultic legends in Genesis, some of these older studies of Semitic religion will be used along with more recent phenomenological studies of ancient religion where these are applicable. The intention here will not be to explore the problem of ancient tribal religion generally or to give an exhaustive description of ancient nomadic religion among the Semites, but only to utilize some of the most important studies of Semitic and ancient religion to clarify the nature of tribal religion in general, and the probable nature of the tribal cultus which could have been the Sitz im Leben of the cultic legends.

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

3. The Religious Dimensions of Tribal Life

Any contact with a manifestation of extraordinary power was contact with deity for ancient man. This power could be experienced in the form of "luck," as well as in the power exercised by the clan leader.[15] In fact the ways in which this power could be encountered are as broad as human experience itself. Always, however, it is understood as having a contingent character; it is not a part of a natural system of things but breaks in, sometimes unexpectedly, from beyond.

Power is understood primarily in terms of concrete effectiveness, i.e., in terms of how it directly influences the life of the person who encounters it. The thing that distinguishes divine power is its success in actually changing or creating something. An example of this is the ancient man's understanding of the divine character of his working tools. The workman treated the tool as a sacred object because it seemed to possess a power that transcended his own, a power which enabled him to be successful in making or improving something.[16] Divinity was thus understood in terms of effective power. Whenever this effective power was encountered it was understood as a free, personal manifestation of deity rather than as a result of the operation of some system of necessity such as natural law. The question which now must be raised concerns the relationship which this deity had with the tribe: what kind of cultus was established, and how did the tribe maintain a continuing relationship with the deity?

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[15] van der Leeuw, p. 5.

Robertson Smith wrote many years ago that, ". . . the parallelism in ancient society between religious and political institutions is complete."[17] This means that the starting point for a consideration of the cult of the patriarchs must be with a consideration of the nature of the tribe which was the socie-political structure in which they lived.

According to G. van der Leeuw, the most primitive communities are not based upon covenants; such a basis would be man-made. Rather, they are founded upon a feeling of unity that is more a product of the unconscious than the conscious mind. This feeling of community is a "given" factor which is the presupposed basis of the group.[18] The basic forms of social organization found in the Old Testament—the family and the tribe—constitute examples of such primitive communities.[19] The feeling of unity in this type of community is closely related to a more concrete unifying bond: common ancestors and common blood.[20] This constitutes a primal type of unity which is prior to all social and political structures. The cohesive power of this primal community was so pervasive that existence outside was inconceivable for the members. Separation from the community was the same as death.[21]

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[16] Ibid., p. 23.

[17] Smith, p. 20.

[18] Phänomenologie, pp. 270f.

[19] Pedersen shows that in the O.T. there is no sharp line of distinction between ~~a family~~, a father's house, and a tribe since all were bound together by the tie of common blood: "Tribe, when still a living term, was not essentially different from the family (mishpāhā), the family not being an external, clearly limited quantity, but the appellation of those who are of common blood or, as the Hebrews say, of common flesh, and the family extends as far as the feeling of unity makes itself felt. Therefore, the line of distinction must necessarily be fluid. A father's house is in itself a family, mishpāhā, and a tribe may be so." Israel, Vols. I & II, pp. 47f.

This basic social unit was not limited to the human dimension. As R. Smith wrote, "The circle into which a man was born was not simply a group of kinsfolk and fellow-citizens but embraced also certain divine beings, the gods of the family and of the state, which to the ancient mind were as much a part of the particular community with which they stood connected as the human members of the social circle."[22] The divine relations were reflections of the human social institutions, and the clan god could be spoken of as father. In that case, ". . . the meaning was that the worshippers were literally of his stock, that he and they made up one natural family with reciprocal family duties to one another."[23] It was thus the social structure that provided a pattern for understanding the nature of the continuous relationship which the clan had with its deity. The individual manifestations of power could be viewed as evidence of the continuing presence of the "father" god, though in some cases these can be viewed as manifestations of separate but still related deities. The chief manifestation of power would have been the power manifested in and through the social structure itself, however, i.e., through the authority held by the father or chieftan of the tribe.

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[20] de Vaux, p. 4; van der Leeuw, pp. 276, 282 (though he notes that other things also serve as powerful unifying forces in some tribes); Smith, p. 32; Smend, p. 24. This did not mean that all who in fact were of common blood always considered themselves kinsmen. As Pedersen says, it extended "as far as the feeling of unity makes itself felt." (pp. 47f.) There was thus a close inter-relationship between the "psychic" community and literal "blood" community. There is consequently a sense in which "Every community is a community of kinsmen with a common ancestor, the bearer of the unity." (p. 54.) Blood is thus more of a symbolical expression of the unity of a tribe than a literal bond. For a critique of the theory of blood unity see H. Wheeler Robinson, "Blood," *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*; more recently see I. Shapera who lifts up the importance of other factors such as geographical proximity and occupation. He does agree, however, that kinship is understood as the basis of a great number of the tribes he has studied in South Africa, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies* (London: Watts, 1956), pp. 1-10. Among the Semitic tribesmen the blood relationship was of prime importance according to J. Scharbert: "Personen die zu einer Lebens- und Rechtsgemeindschaft gehören, müssen verwandt sein, wenigstens auf Grund einer Art Adoption. Nach arabischer Auffassung ist wirklicher Verlass nicht auf Freunde und Vertragspartner, sondern allein auf die Blutsverwandten," *Solidarität in Segen und Fluch im Alten Testament und in seiner Umwelt* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1958), p. 78; also, for the process of unifying genealogies, see p. 82.

[21] de Vaux, p. 5; van der Leeuw, p. 277; Scharbert, p. 78.

[22] Smith, p. 29.

Tribal religion can be understood in terms of the function it had within this community. According to Robertson Smith, the occasion which called forth some of the most primeval rites was a disturbance in the natural relationship between the tribe and its deity, or a feeling of loss of contact with him. In order to overcome this estrangement, sacrifices were made. By sacrificing an animal and distributing the flesh between the clan members and the god, the blood relationship between the deity and the clan was renewed.[24] The primary physical and spiritual unity was both strengthened and restored. The rites thus did not create the relationship with the deity any more than they created relationships between members of the tribe. These primary relationships were the presupposition of the rites.

In cases where the relationship with the deity was disturbed and sacrificial rites had to be performed, it was advantageous for the tribesman to go to certain places ". . . where the god is constantly present in some visible embodiment, or which has received a special consecration by some extraordinary manifestation of deity."[25] So consideration must now be given to the relationship of the tribe to sacred space and to the particular types of divine manifestations that are found there.

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[23] *Ibid*., p. 30.

[24] *Ibid*., p. 360. More recently van der Leeuw confirmed this "sacramental" theory of sacrifice but added that it can be combined with the "gift theory": "Von diesem Gesichtspunkt aus sind nicht nur Gaben- und Kommunionsopfer keine Gegensätze, sondern es ist auch das Opfer in die Mitte des Lebens gerückt. Es ist kein *opus supererogatorium*, sondern die Betatigung der Lebensmacht selbst." (pp. 399f.) Cf. Oesterly and Robinson, pp. 181-183; also, communion theory, Pedersen, *Israel*, Vol. IV, p. 315.

4. Sacred Space

One of the problems posed at the outset of this study was that of the relationship between the nomadic, patriarchal tribes and the cult sites in Palestine. Does nomadic religion stand opposed to all localized numina so that one could say with certainty that when the patriarchal tribes worshipped at Shechem, Beersheba, and Bethel they were becoming sedentary? This is the question which must be answered before going on to explore the meaning of sacred objects such as altars that are found at these locations.

Robertson Smith says that at the time of Mohammed every holy place ". . . was a little center of settled agricultural life, and so also a center of ideas foreign to the purely nomadic worshippers that frequented it."[26] The primary purpose for these visits by the nomad to cultic centers was to fulfill certain vows (see below for the relationship between vows and holy places).[27] The nomad probably did not participate in the official religious rites practiced by the sedentary people at all. This at least establishes the possibility that a visit to a permanent cult site by a nomad does not mean that he is becoming sedentary or accepting the religion of the sedentary people. This evidence, however, comes from the time when Allah had been established as the transcendent god to be honored by all. It tells us very little about the relation of the tribal god to local numina.

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[25] Smith, p. 165.

[26] *Ibid*., p. 113.

[27] *Ibid*., p. 109.

Smith, however, believes that the relationship of nomadic tribes to fixed cult sites began in the early stages of tribal religion. One particular holy place with which the tribe would have had close connections is the fountain or spring in the wilderness (See below). Though tribes did not exercise the rights of land ownership, they could establish control over watering places which were vital to their own interests. This seems to have already been a practice in patriarchal times as evidenced by Isaac's dispute with the herdsmen of Gerar in Gen. 26:17ff. Control over the use of these places would have been necessary in order to insure the tribe of sufficient water for its own flocks when the supply was low. Because the herds could not long remain in the area without access to water, control of the wells and springs gave the tribe a degree of control over the surrounding land as well. Though the tribe might remain in the area for an extended period of time, it is unlikely that the members considered themselves to be the owners of the land. They merely held it by virtue of superior strength.[28]

These springs in the wilderness were considered to be holy places, and the tribe who controlled them for an extended period of time would have had to establish some kind of positive relationship with the numen which dwelt there. Nomadic tribal religion would thus have had to be flexible enough to permit the worship of localized deities in situations such as this.

There were other places in the wilderness as well, such as deep ravines, glens, and mountains, which the nomad considered to be inhabited by divine spirits. Though he might normally try to avoid these places, in time of great need he knew he could go there and establish contact with deity.

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[28] Among some nomadic African tribes Shapera has found a very definite territorial consciousness. Among others where the territorial consciousness is not so great there is still a tendency to remain in the vicinity of the same watering places and to consider these places as theirs because of continuous usage. (p. 12.)

A summary of the relation between Semitic nomads and holy places is given by Robertson Smith. Its excellence requires that it be quoted in full.

> This point of view, which in the Old Testament appears only as an occasional survival of primitive thought, corresponds to the ordinary ideas of Semitic heathenism. The local relations of the gods are natural relations: men worship at a particular spot because it is the natural home or haunt of the god. Holy places in this sense are older than temples, and even older than the beginnings of settled life. The nomad shepherd or the savage hunter has no fixed home, and cannot think of his god as having one, but he has a district or beat to which his wanderings are usually confined, and within it again he has his favourite lairs or camping-places. And on this analogy he can imagine for himself tracts of sacred ground habitually frequented by the gods, and special points within these tracts which the deity particularly affects. By and by, under the influence of agriculture and settled life, the sacred tract becomes the estate of the god, and the special sacred points within it become his temples; but originally the former is only a mountain or glade in the unenclosed wilderness, and the latter are merely spots in the desert defined by some natural landmark, a cave, a rock, a fountain or a tree.[29]

The conclusion must then be that there is no fundamental opposition between manifestations of divine power in sacred places and nomadic religion. For a tribe to honor a local numen does not have to mean that the tribe is becoming sedentary.

Nomadic religion was probably more varied and flexible than has been recognized in recent studies. The tribe could perceive the divine power in the numinous spirit of the clan leader—the father or the chieftan.[30] It was his power that probably constituted the continuing center of tribal life as it wandered. It is also possible for the tribe to carry a holy object in the migrations representing the presence of the tribal deity.[31]

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[29] Religion of the Semites, p. 118.

[30] van der Leeuw, p. 282. For the nature and significance of the tribal chief among South African tribes see Shapera, pp. 40ff., 205; also, Scharbert, p. 80.

[31] The ark of the covenant is, of course, an immediate example of such an object that comes to mind, but see also M. Eliade, who tells of an

These various ways of understanding the form of the divine presence are not mutually exclusive. They simply illustrate the fact that the divine presence could manifest itself in all of the important spheres of the ancient nomad's experience.

5. Sacred Objects

Now that the possibility has been established that nomadic tribes could have had occasional relationships to localized deities, an examination can be made of the specific objects which always represented the presence of divine power in the holy places. The primary intention here is to determine the religious significance of constructing a stone altar since this is the action that plays such an important role in the patriarchal cultic legends.

The visible representation of divine power among the Semites could either be natural phenomena such as water and trees, or objects set up or constructed by man such as pillars, altars, and piles of stones.[32] Water manifested divine power through its purificatory and health giving qualities.[33] It also possesses peculiar characteristics which make it well suited for giving oracles. Judicial decisions and other matters were often determined by the movement of the sacred waters in the wind or after a sacrifice had been cast in.[34]

The sacred tree was usually found in the vicinity of a holy spring. In Canaan it is a particularly frequent symbol of the divine presence.

Australian tribe that always carried a sacred pole with them which represented the connection between the tribe and the divine world. _The Sacred and the Profane_, p. 32.

[32] Smith, p. 169.

[33] _Ibid_., pp. 182ff.; cf. van der Leeuw, p. 47.

[34] Smith, p. 178.

Their long life and reproductive capabilities caused them to represent the female fertility principle.[35] More broadly stated, the sacred tree represented the power man needed to overcome death. This power manifested itself in the yearly death and rebirth of the tree in harmony with the seasons.[36] In the Old Testament these trees are called *ʾasherim* and are characteristically found at Canaanite cult centers throughout the period of the kingdom.

The most important holy object symbolizing the presence of divine power is the holy stone. It can be set up as a pillar, or many stones can be gathered into a heap or used to build an altar. It is difficult to determine why stones came to have a special relationship to divinity. Robertson Smith rejects the idea that stones were originally honored because they actually resembled a particular deity.[37] He rather believes ". . . that the choice of a pillar or cairn as the primitive idol was not dictated by any other consideration than convenience for ritual purposes."[38] This means that the stone simply served as an enduring marker at the place where the god had been present and presumably would be again. He believes that the erection of an altar at a place for the God to manifest himself was an improvement over the simple worship of natural phenomena.[39]

This evolutionary interpretation has been corrected by van der Leeuw who says that for ancient man there was no distinction between the "natural" and the "cultural" and thus no essential distinction between the power he encountered in a so-called "natural" object and one he encountered in something made by man. In both cases it is a matter of encountering divine power.[40] It would have been the special powers encountered in the stone, because of its unusual size or shape, etc. that would have caused ancient man to view it as a dwelling place of divinity.[41] Such an event could well stand behind the story of Jacob's encounter with deity at Bethel. (See below, Ch.III, A)

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[36] Cf. van der Leeuw, p. 43.

[37] "A cairn or rude stone pillar is not a portrait of anything, and I take it that we shall go on altogether false lines if we try to explain its selection as a divine symbol by any consideration of what it looks like." Smith, p. 207. Oesterley and Robinson take the opposing viewpoint. (pp. 41f.)

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[39] ". . . but practically the idea that the godhead consents to be present in a structure set for him by his worshippers implies a degree of intimacy and permanency in the relations between man and the being he adores which marks an advance on the worship of natural objects." *Ibid.*, pp. 206f.

While van der Leeuw is doubtless correct in attempting to understand the worship of stones phenomenologically rather than in the evolutionary fashion of R. Smith, there is probably an element of truth in Smith's contention that the stone altar was frequently simply created by man as a cultic object apart from any immediate encounter with the divine powers of the stone. But perhaps C. H. Ratschow who seems to occupy a middle position on this issue has come closer to an accurate understanding of the religious meaning of the altar. He says that the functional principle which is common to all types of altars is that they are signs of the presence of deity and therefore mark the place where communication is possible (Ort der Kommunikations-Möglichkeit").[42] They indicate the place of the epiphany of God. This, he contends, is the fundamental meaning of the altar in all types of cultic rites.[43] The role of the altar is not simply functional but is of decisive importance. It represents the specific place of the divine presence.

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[40] van der Leeuw, p. 38.

[41] Smith, p. 39, 21; see also, Pedersen, p. 214.

[42] C. H. Ratschow, Religion im Geschichte und Gegenwart (3rd ed.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1957), p. 253.

[43] Cf. Eliade, p. 27, who speaks of altars and temples as "doors of the gods" and thus the places where divine power enters the human sphere.

If a man has not encountered the power of god in the particular stones of the altar he has made, how is he to know that god will be present in them? Smith answers this by saying, ". . . the rule of Semitic worship is that the artificial symbol can only be set up in a place already consecrated by tokens of the divine presence. . . ."[44] In this case the construction of an altar might be primarily for ritualistic purposes, but the altar would still represent the divine presence because of its location at a holy place.

The chief religious meaning of an altar, then, is that it marks the concrete place where deity is present for communication with man. An altar can be built for either of two reasons: because the deity has manifested himself through the particular stone or stones of the altar and therefore revealed that he dwelt in them, or to serve as a symbol of the divine presence in a cultic ritual. In the latter case the altar would always be constructed at a place where the deity had already manifested his power in the past.

Having established that the nomadic religion of the patriarchal tribes could have included the worship of local numina under certain circumstances and determined the religious meaning of the chief ritual action in the cultic legends, the building of altars at sacred places, the final step in this investigation is to determine the specific cultic rite which can best explain the existence of the form consisting of three parts: (1) the appearance of deity, (2) the promise, (3) the building of an altar.

6. Sacred Rites

Two different spheres must be carefully distinguished from one another with respect to tribal rites: intra-tribal rites and inter-tribal rites. The intra-tribal rites presuppose the existence of a primary type of community based on blood, whereas the inter-tribal rites are primarily concerned with establishing communal ties of various kinds between previously separate groups.

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[44] Religion of the Semites, p. 207.

The most common rite associated with an altar in intra-tribal religion is sacrifice. As it was shown above, the intention of this rite is to strengthen the vitality of the tribe by means of a communal feast with the tribal god.[45] The altar represented the presence of the divinity, and the deity was able to participate in the consumption of the feast when the priest poured or smeared the blood of the animals on the altar. In this way the deity was able to "drink" the blood.[46] Restoration of the blood relationship through a communal feast with the deity is the ultimate intention of this rite. If there was a verbal, oracular element here it would have been secondary. The form of the patriarchal legends which center in the divine word of promise present the word as the basis of the relationship between man and god and could thus not have originated in this rite.

There is one other intra-tribal rite directly related to altar building which may be more closely related to the patriarchal cultic legends: the construction of an altar in order to establish a claim to the possession of land. Smith says that in Arabia the right of private property was contingent upon a man building on the land or cultivating it.[47] The land surrounding a temple was often understood as the possession of the deity honored there and consequently the possession of the tribe whose deity this happened to be. In a very rudimentary sense, then, the construction of an altar might be construed as a way of establishing claim on the surrounding land. In the nomadic period this is not to be conceived of as a permanent claim in the formal legal sense of the word, since it undoubtedly only meant temporary control. Later, however, it could serve as a basis for a more permanent legal claim at a time when the tribe was in the process of abandoning the nomadic life. It is known that among sedentary cultures the building of an altar on foreign soil is a way of claiming possession of the surrounding land.[48] It seems unlikely, therefore, that the rite of land possession associated with the construction of an altar would have actually been practiced by the nomadic tribes. The most that could be said would be that altar construction for the nomad _may_ have implied control of the surrounding land in some cases. Later a more sedentary minded people could have used the tradition which told of the construction of an altar at a given place by a nomadic ancestor as a basis for a claim to the land. This is most likely what happened in Israelite history. At any rate, the _promise_ of land could never have been a part of a rite of land _possession_. The conclusion, then, is that the form of the cultic legends in Genesis did not originate in either of these major inner-tribal religious rites connected with altar construction.

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[45] Cf. van der Leeuw, p. 402.

[46] Smith also observes that when a holy stone was anointed it was believed that this was the same as anointing the skin of the deity. (p. 233.)

[47] Religion of the Semites, p. 143.

The final type of rite to be considered is of a qualitatively different type, the inter-tribal rites consisting primarily of oaths and covenants. Whereas the intra-tribal rites are mostly concerned with renewing the communal life of the tribe, the inter-tribal rite is concerned with establishing a communal relationship with a person or group outside the tribe.[49]

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[48] Cf. Eliade, pp. 29ff.

[49] van der Leeuw, pp. 282f.; Johannes Pedersen, _Der Eid bei den Semiten_ (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner Verlag, 1914), p. 21; also Smith who says, ". . .a covenant means artificial brotherhood, and has no place where the natural brotherhood of which it is an imitation already subsists." (p. 318.)

At the outset a word of clarification must be given about the relationship between oaths and covenants and their function in tribal religion. In Johannes Pedersen's thorough-going study of the oath among the Semites he clearly shows the intimate relationship between the oath and the covenant. In Arabic the word *hilf*, which is the general designation for a covenantal relationship, originally meant "swear." It thus referred to the word which binds the parties in the covenant together. So Pedersen concludes that the meaning of the oath is inseparable from the meaning of the covenant.[50] The same is true in Israelite thought. The act of entrance into a covenantal relationship in which the parties assume binding obligations has the character of an oath. Some examples of oaths of this type are the oath sworn by Isaac and Abimelech (Gen. 26:31ff.), and the oath sworn by David and Jonathan (II Sam. 21:7).[51] The oath in the latter case is called a Yahweh oath while their relationship is described in another passage as a Yahweh covenant (II Sam. 20:8). These and many other passages where no clear distinction is made between oaths and covenants convince Pedersen that in the conception of the Biblical writers ". . . the entrance into the *berit* itself may be an oath or it may be based upon one."[52] This is particularly true of instances where the covenant means an unbreakable promise. In the story of Jacob and Laban where Jacob promises not to treat the daughters of Laban badly the word *berit* is used even though "oath" would have described the event just as well.[53] Thus insofar as the reference is to a promise, the meanings of oath and covenant are very nearly the same. There are shades of difference in meaning, however, which in other usages of these words become more pronounced. In general one could say that the oath refers more to the concrete utterance while covenant refers to the larger relationship between the two parties. Some of the other uses of the oath will be mentioned below.

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[50] *Eid*, p. 21. Also, Dennis J. McCarthy describes the two major moments in the Sumerian covenant: "the one in which the party lays down the stipulation and the other in which the second party ratifies them by binding himself under oath to observe them." P. 16; and further, "The treaty is in its very nature a contract established by an oath. . . ." P. 47. *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963).

[51] "Three Covenants in Genesis," *CBQ*, Vol. 26 (1964), pp. 179-189.

[52] *Eid*, pp. 40f.

[53] *Ibid*., p. 41.

The use of the oath and covenant is also not rigidly limited to inter-tribal religious rites, though this is generally the case. Van der Leeuw mentions the fact that the different age groups within a tribe may be separated into various kinds of covenantal societies. These, however, are secondary developments within the original unity of tribal life.[54] Even in tribes where such societies exist it does not follow that the religion of the whole tribe would be based upon a covenant. Oaths may also be used as means of determining guilt within a tribe. (See below.)[55] As a general rule, however, the use of the oath and covenant in the sense mentioned above, as referring to the acceptance of unbreakable promises or obligations, is much more characteristic of inter-tribal relations where such obligations are not presupposed by the community and where a certain distance between the parties requires the formal utterance of a word of promise. Now the meaning of the oath and its relation to altar building must be considered.

Because of the varied terminology used to refer to the oath among the ancient Semites, Pedersen believes that it must be given a broad definition. He describes an oath as ". . . each assertion or agreement which is made with super-human confirmation."[56] Within this broad category two basic types of oaths can be separated: the assertory oath and the promissory oath.[57] The assertory oath refers to the relationship of the swearer to an event in the past, whereas the promissory oath refers to his relationship to a future event.[58] The former is the type of oath used primarily in legal proceedings to determine the guilt of the accused. It can possibly be used to determine guilt within tribal life as well as in inter-tribal conflicts, though the evidence for the use of the oath in this way within a tribe is very scant. It is the promissory oath that represents the more typical meaning: an ultimate commitment.[59] The major concern of this study is with this latter type of oath because of its relationship with the patriarchal promise.

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[54] Phänomenologie, p. 283.

[55] Pedersen, Eid, p. 183. For a discussion of inner-tribal legal life, see Scharbert, pp. 88-100.

[56] Eid, p. 20; comp. RGG, p. 347.

The rites associated with the giving of oaths will be discussed first, and then the religious meaning of the oath will be described.

Because the oath represents an ultimate commitment, it is one of the most awesome utterances of which man is capable. The radical seriousness of the moment in which such a commitment was made caused ancient man to seek added strength and support from various sources. One of these sources of power was the divine world since deity was synonymous with power. In order for the nomad to come into contact with divine power it was usually necessary for him to go to a holy place. This could be any one of the places already mentioned: holy trees, springs, stones, or temples. In order to actually make contact with the divine power the swearer had to touch a holy object in this place. According to Pedersen, the formula, "to swear by X," is to be taken literally. It was necessary for the man to take his stand "by" the object representing the presence of the deity and so to literally swear "by" the deity. Among Semitic tribesmen a sacred object frequently used for oath making is the gravestone of an ancestor. The man taking the oath would place his hand on the stone and swear by the power and spirit of his father.[60] If a man went to a temple he could stand by the gate post or place his hand on the emblem of the deity, both of which represented the divine presence.[61] If it were impossible for the nomad to go to a holy place then he could simply raise his hand toward heaven, the dwelling place of the gods. This type of gesture is frequent in the Old Testament where there was a reluctance to identify Yahweh with any emblem or holy object.[62]

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[57] Ibid., p. 179. Also, Friedrich Horst, "Der Eid im Alten Testament," Gottes Recht (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), pp. 292-293.

[58] Ibid., p. 279.

[59] "Die Aufnahme einer unverbrüchlichen Verpflictung is dasselbe wie ein Eid." Ibid., p. 10.

The holy object as the representation of the presence of the deity served not only as a source of power for the swearer; it could serve as a witness to the commitments made. It is clear that this is the major function of the stone heap in Gen. 31:52. The deity would bring good upon the one who kept the oath and evil upon the one who broke it.[63]

Sacrifices were also offered frequently as a part of the oath ceremony. The shedding of the blood of the animal permits the life-force of the animal to pass into the man thereby increasing his strength in the moment of swearing. The sacrificial animal is thus another source of power.[64]

It is clear, however, that the meaning of the sacrifice in the oath ceremony does not end here. As was indicated above, the oath belongs to a secondary stage in tribal life. It is a type of union based upon words which supplements the original blood union of the tribe. The sacrifice, on the other hand, originated within the tribe and served the purpose of strengthening the life of the community and its relation to the tribal god. The common consumption of flesh of the sacrificial animal was a way of strengthening the physical unity of the group.[65] When the sacrifice is performed with a party outside of the tribe, however, it is necessary to bring that party into the community of common blood. This can be done through the blood covenant when the parties actually mix their own blood in some way, or as is more common, the parties may consume the flesh of a sacrificial animal.[66] The mixing of blood through sacrificial rites thus often accompanies the verbal oaths in order to make the communal ties between the two parties complete.

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[60] _Ibid_., p. 144, also, p. 149.

[61] _Ibid_., p. 146.

[62] _Ibid_., pp. 149f. See also, Horst, p. 308.

[63] Pedersen, _Israel_, p. 215.

[64] "Wir verstehen auch hier die Bedeutung des Opfers am besten aus der des heiligen Ortes, namlich: es soll dem ausgesprochenen Worte Kraft verleihen." Pedersen, _Eid_, p. 148.

It is already clear that the rites associated with the swearing of oaths are intimately related to sacred places and objects, particularly with sacred stones. The most fundamental rite is that of placing the hand on a holy object during the moment of utterance.[67] This establishes a primary relationship between the verbal utterance and the object representing the deity. The rite of sacrifice is also associated in many cases with the oath ceremony and requires some object representing the presence of the deity. Since one of the major forms of the oath is the promissory oath, it is thus in the oath ceremony that a primary relation can be found between stone altars and the utterance of unbreakable sacred promises. It is here, therefore, that the Sitz im Leben of the cultic legends of Genesis can be found. It must be noted, however, that this rite does not belong to the most primitive tribal religion, but it originated at a time when tribal unity was being transferred from the basis of common blood to that of a verbal commitment.

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[65] Cf. Smith, p. 319.

[66] *Ibid*., pp. 316ff.; see also, Pedersen, *Eid*, p. 21. "Dem Bund zugrunde liegt die Blutmischung. Dadurch werden die beiden Parteien zusammamenfugt; denn Verwandtschaft ist für den Semiten Teilhaben an gemeinsamen Blut."

[67] The placing of the hand under the thigh in Gen. 24 does not constitute an exception to this because the reproductive organs were honored as sacred because of their powers.

Finally a word must be said about the religious meaning of the oath as a word of power. When a man swore an oath among the ancient Arabs he intended to establish some type of communal bond between two previously separate individuals or groups. The whole significance of the oath depended upon its being accepted by the other party in trust. The willingness to trust a man's word, however, depended, in turn, upon that man's ability and willingness to do as he has spoken. Ultimately then, the possibility of bringing two separate parties into a communal bond by means of an oath depended upon whether the persons involved had the strength or power to execute the oath. This made it necessary for the swearer to summon every means of strengthening himself in order to convince the other party of his ability to fulfill his promise. As it was shown above, one of the chief ways to gain strength in this crucial moment was to literally make contact with divine power. Since the deity served as a witness to the oath as well, the divine presence served to add validity to the oath not only by strengthening the swearer but also by making him afraid of the consequences of breaking his oath. To do so could mean death. The role played by deity in the oath ceremony lifted the oath to the rank of a sacred bond that was higher and holier than either of the individuals involved. Once the oath had been uttered it exercised power over the person who swore it.[68]

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[68] Pedersen, Israel, p. 449; Eid, p. 129.

The keeping of an oath was considered by the Arabs to be a sign of strength. The phrase, "to keep his promise," is an expression for power.[69] For this reason they took great pride in fulfilling their oaths and often tribal poets sung of this.[70] It is understandable, then, that the utterance of an oath was a very important moment in the life of a tribe. The words themselves were the expression of the power of the entire group. Johannes Pedersen has given a beautiful description of the significance of this event.

> Everything that forms the essence of his soul, and which it draws with it when it reaches its highest tension: honour, the fathers, the God; all this fills the word with a concentrated strength, making it just as holy as that spoken by the prophet from the depths of his soul; the oath is pronounced out of the strength of the God and with him as a participant. Hence the uttering of an oath is a holy act, and it accords well with its nature that it is to be pronounced in the holy place, perhaps in connection with an offering or contact with holy objects.[71]

In the oath, the concepts of power and truth are united. A true word is one which can be carried out. As Pedersen expresses it, "Truth is what is proven to be so" (Wahr ist, was sich bewährt).[72]

Because the truth of a word is connected with the power it possesses, and because this power is concretely manifested in the oral utterance itself, the true word has the character of a concrete event in the life of the ancient Semite. In our own philosophical mode of thought, truth is an abstract concept which concerns the relationship of a statement with an existing fact. For the Semite, however, the decisive relationship for a true word is not with facts but with men.[73] This means that the power the spoken oath has over its hearers is an important factor in understanding the meaning of a true word in the Semitic mind. The reason for this lies in the fact that this word concerns a state of affairs which has not yet come into existence. There is no presently existing fact to which it can correspond. Whether it does represent a future event or not depends on the power of the swearer manifested in the oath ceremony, and whether the word is understood as a true word or not depends on the impact it has on the hearers. So the decisive relation for a true word is, indeed, with men rather than with facts.

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[69] Pedersen, Eid, p. 130.

[70] Ibid., pp. 128f.

[71] Pedersen, Israel, p. 450.

[72] Pedersen, Eid, p. 130.

[73] Ibid.

The true word is not merely a "tag" given to an object or event for the Semite. It is an occurrence in verbal form of the consummate power of the person or group which utters it. In the literal sense the true word, or oath, is a word-event.

The indirect relationship between true words and facts is even more clearly illustrated by an apparent exception to the rule: the assertory oath which does intend to establish a fact that has already come into existence. This type of oath is generally used in a trial to determine if the person accused is actually guilty of the crime. Pedersen says that truth in this situation means to be in the right. But one's fundamental rightness is also based upon one's ability and power. Whether the assertory oath is accepted as truth and whether one is judged to be in the right depends to a large extent upon the power manifested in the utterance. Its correspondence to a fact is of secondary importance in this immediate situation.[74]

Van der Leeuw says that the oath in primitive religion has the power to make something true or untrue in the mind of the community. If an oath given to establish facts is falsely sworn, the belief is that the person will be afflicted with evil or die.[75] But it must be remembered that the concept of truth operative here is not western.

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[74] *Ibid*., pp. 130f.

The spoken word in an oath ceremony is thus considered to be an event which determines reality in both the past and the future. This oral utterance is itself an expression or form of truth rather than simply being a word which "stands for" or refers to so-called "objective" reality. There are, of course, many questions which could be raised about the adequacy of this understanding of truth especially as it applies to the situation of a trial; but our own trial procedures would have to be carefully examined before it could be simply classified as primitive.[76]

It is common for the gods of the Semitic world to speak in the form of oaths.[77] Among the Arabs the absolute power of God is understood in terms of the ability of Allah to always fulfill his oaths.[78] In the Old Testament as well, the power of Yahweh is understood in terms of his power to carry out his intentions. Pedersen says that the root אמן means "that which has the power to succeed."[79] It always refers to the coming to pass of some future state of affairs rather than to the existence of something in the present. The concept of divine truth in the Old Testament is thus fundamentally related to the meaning of a promissory oath. One could even say that the promissory oath provides a typically Semitic form for expressing divine truth.

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[75] van der Leeuw, p. 467.

[76] In a review of the book *Law and Psychology* by James Marshall (Bobs-Merrill, 1966) in *Time* (88:3, p. 58, July 15, 1966), the following excerpt is cited: "It is a Kafkaesque world in which people testify to what they neither saw nor heard, '*in which victory is an end in itself*' and life, liberty, property and reputation are 'staked on bets or guesses as to what really happened.'" (Italics mine.)

[77] Pedersen, *Eid.*, pp. 155ff.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[79] *Ibid.*

Conclusions

The intention of this chapter has been to investigate the meaning of altar building as a possible way of finding the situation where the form of some of the major patriarchal cultic legends could have originated. The major problem in this approach was the difficulty in determining the extent to which the religion of the sedentary peoples of Canaan is already reflected in the legends which are connected to Palestinian cult sites. The results are as follows: (1) The first element in the cultic legend, the appearance of God, can be explained on the basis of the rite of altar building. This action is itself closely related to the epiphany of deity in the mind of the ancient Semite. The building of a stone altar marks the place where communication with deity is possible. It may also be a way of establishing a relationship with divine power. The presence of a god at the altar, however, is not guaranteed. The only way one could be reasonably certain of the divine presence would be to build the altar at a place where deity had manifested himself in the past and where it was known that spirits dwelt. The only other possibility is for divine power to manifest itself in an extraordinary fashion through a particular stone, thereby revealing its dwelling place. Something very similar to this probably occurred in the original story of the founding of the cult site by Jacob at Bethel in Gen. 28:10ff. The other patriarchs seem to have gone to established holy "places" to erect their altars as evidenced by the repeated use of the word מקום to describe it. (See below.) (2) The particular form in which the divine power manifested itself in these cultic legends is that of the powerful word, the unbreakable promise. This promise can best be understood as a promissory oath. It is in the ceremony connected with the giving of an oath that the origin of the three major characteristics of the promise to the patriarchs can be found: (a) the form of the promise corresponds to the promissory oath (see below for the form analysis); (b) the promise is a divine pronouncement and correspondingly, the oath is a typical speech form for the expression of divine words among Semites; (c) the promise is given at a holy place and is connected with the building of an altar just as the oath often is. Furthermore, the religious meaning of an oath corresponds to the meaning of the promise to the patriarchs. It is the verbal expression of an absolute commitment of the power of a person to do something in the future. Since power and truth were equated in the mind of the Semite, and deity represented absolute power, an oath by a god was a way of expressing divine truth. For the words of Yahweh to be formulated and presented as promissory oaths was a typical Semitic way of indicating their absolute validity: they were words which would be actualized. (3) Now the answer can be given to the question about the relationship of nomadic religion to localized numina. Because the epiphany of the deity occurred at a holy place in Canaan does not mean that this element is basically Canaanite and thus foreign to nomadic tribal religion. The sacrificial rites which most certainly were one of the primary features of nomadic religion were often performed at altars in holy places, and an epiphany of the deity at the altar was necessary for the rite to be effective. There is no reason to doubt that the patriarchs could have gone to some of the holy places in Canaan from time to time to offer special sacrifices in the event of some evidence of serious estrangement from their deity. In addition, tribes established control over watering places which were inhabited by local water spirits thereby requiring the tribe to establish some kind of positive relationship with this kind of local numen. It is not necessary, therefore, to consider the divine epiphany in these cultic legends as a foreign element representing sedentary Canaanite religion.[80]

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[80] The self-presentation of the deity which is a part of the epiphany

Furthermore, it has also been shown that the epiphany of the deity is a necessary part of the oath ceremony among ancient nomadic Semites, and this epiphany almost always had to occur at some holy place or in connection with some holy object such as a tomb or altar, spring, etc. Since the nomads from whom this evidence was taken were probably more nomadic than the patriarchal tribes, there is no reason to believe that the patriarchs in their nomadic period could not have gone to holy places to settle their disputes with other tribes through the swearing of oaths. This would have involved the epiphany of their tribal god at a holy place probably in conjunction with the building of an altar as in the story of Jacob and Laban. The epiphany and the promissory oath belong together in the ancient Semitic oath ceremony, so there is no reason to think of the elements of the promise and the epiphany of god in the cultic legends of Genesis as being originally separate.

The general picture of patriarchal religion in Genesis is thereby correct insofar as it implies that the patriarchal tribes built altars and experienced the epiphany of deity at some of the cultic sites in Palestine in connection with sacrificial rites or oath ceremonies with other tribes. It is incorrect, however, insofar as it makes the divine promissory oath the basis of patriarchal religion. In the text as it stands today, the initial revelation of the patriarcahal god—the first manifestation of his power (Gen. 12:1f. and 7f.)—is in the form of a powerful word, a promise. This means that the promissory oath becomes the basis of the patriarch's relation to god. On the level of human relations it has been shown that the oath is not used as the foundation of communal relations until tribes began uniting with one another to form confederacies. Where there is common blood this

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will be explained on the basis of its relationship with the standard oath formulae in the form analysis below.

serves as the basis of the community. The relation to the tribal god is likewise based upon blood and this tie is strengthened through sacrificial rites in which the tribal members and their god partake of the same flesh. Where there is a manifestation of the power of the god in a revelatory experience it is generally concrete, i.e., through the qualities of a stone, water, trees or through the might manifested in a leader. The understanding of the oath as a verbal manifestation of power grew out of the intertribal relations where it was necessary to rely on the word of the other party in order to effect some kind of agreement between independent groups. This appreciation of the power of the word would not have developed in the tribal sphere where the members were already unified by blood and under the authority of the tribal leader. Agreements within this sphere are reached through the agency of the leader who represents the ultimate authority by virtue of his familial rank and often his personal mental and physical strength.

The conclusion must then be that when the writers of Genesis portray the initial manifestation of the power of God to the patriarchs as a word-event—a promissory oath—they are reflecting the mentality of a later period when tribes are giving up their sovereign independence and nomadic life and forming permanent confederacies. This does not mean that there was no place in nomadic religion for oracular utterances of various types in response to sacrifices and cultic laments. It will be shown that very ancient cultic legends going back to the nomadic period stand behind the legends in Gen. 15 and others as well. It is possible that a type of oracular promise could have been a part of nomadic religion (the types of promises will be examined below and their probable time of origin discussed); but the oracular utterance was not the basis of this religion. It was, rather, simply one of its many expressions. During the period when the tribes were beginning to become sedentary and to form large confederacies, however, political expediency coupled with religious insight could have led the chief thinkers to the conclusion that the foundation of the relationship between these diverse tribes in the confederacy and between the confederacy and its deity was a verbal oath or covenant rather than a bond of blood. This did not mean that blood was completely discounted as a unifying factor among the tribes.[81] One of the purposes of Genesis is to show that the tribes are also related by blood; but this factor has been moved into a secondary position. This is clearly illustrated by the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. The child of the promise comes to his inheritance not by virtue of his blood, but because of the word of God that both threatened and saved his life.[82] In the relation to God, blood has entirely disappeared as a factor.

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The final conclusion concerning the Sitz im Leben of the patriarchal cultic legends is then that the oath both does and does not provide an adequate explanation of the characteristic features of this Gattung. It does provide an adequate explanation insofar as it shows that the basic elements of the legend: the appearance of deity, the giving of a promise, and the building of an altar, are all fundamental elements of the oath ceremony as it was practiced by the ancient nomadic Semites. This religious rite therefore provides a way of understanding how these three elements could be present in a single Gattung. Of course, in those legends where these elements have been supplemented and there is no mention of altar building, the possibility of a different Sitz im Leben will have to be considered.[83]

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[81] Smith, in describing the worship of deities at this stage of history says, ". . . the circle of worship was still the kin, though the deity worshipped was not of the kin. . . ." (p. 668.)

[82] Cf. Gerhard von Rad, who points out the fact that God intends to make it clear to Abraham that the promise is a pure gift and not ". . . retained by virtue of any legal title or with the help of a human demand." Genesis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 239; see also, van der Leeuw who points out the distinction between blood inheritance and inheritance based on the promise in Genesis. (p. 283.)

Since the oath ceremony was primarily an inter- rather than an inner-tribal rite in the earliest stages of tribal development, it cannot provide an explanation for the origin of the type of oath legends found in Genesis, i.e., oath legends which serve as the basis of inner-tribal religion. Because tribal religion was based upon a blood relationship rather than upon a covenant or oath, the origin of this type of oath legend has to be sought, not in tribal life, but in the life of the Israelite amphictyony which was a type of society founded upon a covenant. The basic features of this Gattung are, nevertheless, taken from the genuine old oath ceremonies practiced by Semitic nomads. The amphictyonic traditionists thus appropriated ancient traditions but used them in such a way that they were made to reflect their own religious mentality. The specific way in which their views influenced the form and content of the cultic legends will become clear in the analysis of the individual legends.

Before proceeding to the form analysis, however, it will be necessary to trace briefly the history of the tribes in their movement toward unification into the twelve tribe amphictyony. This history must be outlined as a background for understanding the specific place of origin of these legends and the successive situations and interpretations through which they have passed.

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[83] Because of the centrality of the promise in the patriarchal religion in Genesis, however, those legends which are concerned exclusively with the giving of the promise must be the starting point for an investigation into the Sitz im Leben of the patriarchal cultic legends.

B. The Traditio-historical Background

The cultic legends of Genesis are products not only of a Sitz im Leben in the patriarchal cult but also of patriarchal history. To speak of patriarchal history, however, is to immediately raise some of the most complex problems in contemporary Biblical research.[84] The individual patriarchs have disappeared in the eyes of the critical scholar behind the obscurity of their own legends. To many there seem to be grounds for speaking only of the accuracy of the depiction of the patriarchal way of life presented in Genesis.[85] But at the same time that the patriarchs as individuals were disappearing, historical scholars were opening up a new segment of Biblical history: the period of the settlement of the land before the rise of the nation of Israel. It was discovered that many of the Israelite tribes had begun to wander into Canaan long before the Exodus and were probably already established there to some extent when the tribes bearing the Exodus traditions arrived.[86] This meant that prior to the establishment of the nation of Israel in Canaan the tribes had not been unified, but rather, each had had its own individual history. The family of Jacob consisting of twelve sons was a projection into the past of the later twelve tribe amphictyony. With the unity of the family of Jacob shattered, then the unity of the

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[84] See John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing (London: SCM Press, 1956); more recently, Bernhard W. Anderson, "The Problem of Old Testament History," London Quarterly and Holborn Review (January, 1965), pp. 5-11.

[85] "We shall probably never be able to prove that Abram really existed, that he did this or that, said thus and so, but what we can prove is that his life and times, as reflected in the stories about him fit perfectly within the early second millennium, but imperfectly within any later period." G. Ernest Wright, Biblical Archaeology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 40.

[86] Two of the major early works dealing with this problem are: Eduard Meyer, Die Israeliten und Ihre Nachbarstämme (Halle: Max Niehmeyer, 1906), and C. Steuernagel, Die Einwanderung der israelitischen Stämme in Kanaan, 1901.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob traditions also became very questionable. Now it was necessary to ask which of the tribes considered Jacob as their ancestor; this consequently led to the probability that the other tribes were associated more closely with either the Abraham traditions or the Isaac traditions. The task of critical scholarship then became that of correlating the patriarchal traditions with the individual tribes to which they originally belonged and tracing the history of these traditions by following the movements of the tribes.[87] So in place of the history of the patriarchs came the history of the patriarchal traditions. Since this history influenced both the form and content of the patriarchal legends, and especially the cultic legends which are the subject of this study, it is necessary to summarize the results of the study of this tradition history in order to properly understand them. This summary will include only the history of the cultic legends and the history of those tribes who were the major bearers of the patriarchal traditions. The first task will be to determine the tribes who bore these traditions. This will be done by ascertaining the areas in which each of the bodies of tradition was primarily located at the time of the amphictyony and then determining the tribes associated with these areas. The second task will be to trace the history of these tribes in the period leading up to the amphictyony.

1. The Original Locations and Tribal Homes of the Patriarchal Traditions

a. The Jacob Traditions

The first step in this analysis is to fix the patriarchs in their own separate locales. Since more problems are related to placing the figure of Jacob, it is well to begin with him.[88] Jacob is associated with most of the major cult centers in Palestine and travels through the length and breadth of the land. The places associated with Abraham to which Jacob travels (Mamre: Gen. 35:27; Hebron: 37:14; Machphela: 50:13) and Isaac (Beersheba: 28:10, 46:1) can be excluded from consideration at the outset. The places remaining can be divided into two groups: those in the middle Palestinian area west of the Jordan (Bethel: 28:19, 35:6, 8, 15, (16), (21);[89] and Shechem: 33:18, 19, 35:4) and those east of the Jordan (in the area of Haran: 29:1, 4; Gilead: 31:21, 23, 25, 47, 48; Mizpah: 31:49; Mahanaim: 32:3; Jabbok: 32:23; Peniel: 32:31, 32: Succoth: 33:17).[90] Of those west of the Jordan, the tomb of Rachael in 35:16 can be excluded since it is primarily connected with Rachael, and the connection between Rachael and Jacob cannot be presupposed.[91] This leaves Shechem and Bethel as the two major centers of the Jacob tradition in the west. The importance of the events connecting Jacob with these two cult centers leads both Noth and Alt to the conclusion that the original home of the Jacob traditions is west of the Jordan.[92] This is supported, in their view, by the fact that the Jacob traditions seem to be more closely associated with the tribe of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) which dwelt in that area during the later history of

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[87] Two of the most important attempts to trace this tradition history are: A. Alt, *KS*, pp. 1-78, and A. Jepsen, "Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Vätergestalten," *Leipzig, Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität*, Vol. 3 (1953/54), pp. 139-155.

[88] The question of the historicity of the patriarchs themselves will not

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be taken up in this study because it does not have a direct bearing on history of the tradition during the period of the settlement of the land.

[89] 35:16 places Jacob at the disputed site of the tomb of Rachael probably in the vicinity of Rama south of Bethel in Benjamanite territory (I Sam. 10:2 and Jer. 31:15); 35:21, the tower of Eder, is unknown.

[90] This omits the reference to his presence in Egypt in 46:28 which does not come into consideration as a possible place for the localization of the Jacob traditions.

[91] See Klaus-Dietrich Schunck who argues that Rachael was originally connected with the tribe of Benjamin; *Benjamin* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1963), p. 10.

[92] Alt, *KS*, pp. 52f. and note 2; Martin Noth, *History of Israel* (2nd ed.; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p. 125.

Israel.[93] The association of Jacob with the eastern traditions would have taken place later when the tribe of Manasseh was expanding into that area.[94] The primary cultic legend of the Jacob tradition would then be the appearance of God in the dream at Bethel (Gen. 28).

This view has been opposed for a number of reasons. Earlier, Meyer maintained that the Bethel cultic legend was an account of the founding of that cult center and thus probably did not originally belong to the Jacob traditions while the Peniel legend associated with the eastern area (Gen. 32:22ff.) is an old hero tale that does not have to be localized.[95] This raises the possibility that it could have been a part of the original pre-Palestinian Jacob traditions. It is less certain, however, that this tradition was *not* localized at Peniel at a very early date.[96] Jepsen finds the Peniel legend more fundamentally related to the Jacob traditions than the Bethel legends because the motif of the struggle for the blessing is central to all of the major Jacob sagas (Jacob-Esau; Jacob-Laban). The antiquity of these traditions is further attested by the fact that the motif of the promise of the land which is the most easily associated with the later Israelite traditions, is completely missing here.[97]

Additional evidence for the primacy of the eastern location of the Jacob traditions is offered by the burial place of Jacob. Though there are two burial traditions, one west of the Jordan at Machpelah (50:13) and one east of the Jordan at an unknown place named Abelmizraim (50:10), Jepsen rightly maintains that the east Jordan burial tradition is the older.[98] The conflict between these two traditions could well have been caused by a later attempt to repress the earlier, probably unknown site of Jacob's grave east of the Jordan and to replace it with a west Jordanian site where the other two patriarchs were buried.

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Noth, *History of Israel*, p. 125.

[95] *Nachbarstämme*, p. 277.

[96] Sigmund Mowinckel, "'Rahelstämme' und 'Leastämme,'" in *Von Ugarit nach Qumran*, Eissfeldt Festschrift, BZAW 77 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1958), p. 131. "Die Sage ist eine Penu'el-Erzählung, die die Heiligkeit der Kultstätte ätiologisch erklären, und daneben auch die Erklärung eines an dieser Stätte geknüpften besonderen Kulttabus geben will: warum die Israeliten (dort) nicht die Lende (des Opfertieres) essen, sondern—das ist als *selbst*verständlich mit vorausgesetzt—sie der Gottheit weihen."

[97] Jepsen, p. 148.

But would there have been tribes in the eastern territory who could have borne the Jacob traditions before the arrival of the Joseph tribes? The tribes associated with this area in the amphictyonic period were Reuben, Gad, and one-half of Manasseh. There is no evidence that the tribe of Manasseh antedates the coming of the Joseph tribes. The origin of the tribe of Gad is very obscure, but there is no evidence that he was directly related to the Jacob traditions.[99] Reuben, on the other hand, is considered by a very old tradition (Gen. 29:31ff.) to be the first son of Leah, Jacob's wife.[100] Furthermore, Jepsen argues against Noth, that there is no reason for believing that Reuben was originally connected with a west Jordanian site.[101] Numbers 32:1ff. offers some important evidence that the original home of Reuben was east of the Jordan.[102] After the Israelites have captured the land of the Midianites located in this area, it is reported that the Reubenites and Gaddites came to Moses and requested for him to give this land to them, since it was suitable for grazing the cattle which they had, and not to require them to go "across the Jordan." This becomes the occasion of a long exhortation by Moses for these tribes not to ". . . discourage the heart of the people of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord has given them" (vs. 7). The result of this is that the Reubenites and Gaddites promise to assist in the capture of the land even though they make it clear that their inheritance is in the east (vss. 17-19). They leave behind all of their wives, children, and possessions and go across the Jordan "armed for war" (vs. 27). Even though one acknowledges the fact that this passage is the result of a complex process of redaction, the oldest stratum of the narrative (vss. 2abα, 5) according to Noth contains an unexplained desire of the Reubenites and Gaddites to remain east of the Jordan.[103] In view of the fact that Reuben is the oldest son of Jacob, and a great many of the oldest Jacob traditions are situated east of the Jordan, the conclusion immediately suggests itself that the original home of the tribe of Reuben was in this area and that it is the bearer of the Jacob traditions (the way in which this tribe came into contact with the other west Jordanian tribes known as the sons of Leah, as well as the reason for the localization of the Jacob traditions at Shechem and Bethel will be discussed below).[104] There are thus substantial reasons for believing that the Jacob traditions were originally localized east of the Jordan and that they were associated with the tribe of Reuben.

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[98] Jepsen opposes Noth's and Alt's view that this grave tradition arose only after the Ephraimites expanded into this area. He says it is unlikely that the Ephraimites were so firmly established in this area that a grave tradition could have arisen. Ibid., p. 146. The grave tradition at Machpelah seems much more doubtful in the light of the fact that it is outside of the major areas associated with Jacob and is also the grave site of Abraham (25:9) and more than likely Isaac (35:27).

[99] As Noth points out, Gad was originally considered to be the son of Zilpah, the maid of Leah, and therefore probably not connected with the Jacob traditions at all until the rise of the amphictyony. Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1930), pp. 8, 14.

[100] Ibid., p. 8.

[101] Jepsen, p. 146.

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[102] Ibid., p. 147.

[103] Martin Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1957), p. 197; also, note 5.

[104] Jepsen, p. 147.

The central cultic legend of this area is the story of the encounter of Jacob with the angel in Gen. 32:22ff. This legend came to be localized at Peniel. Its centrality in the Jacob traditions is evidenced not only by the prevalence of the motif of the struggle in the most important Jacob sagas, but also by the closely related name of the deity associated with Jacob: "the strength of Jacob"[105] (Gen. 49:24).[106] But this relationship cannot be established with certainty until a careful study of the texts of both the Bethel as well as the Peniel legends is made.

b. The Abraham Traditions

The original location of the figure of Abraham is not as difficult to determine as that of Jacob. If one omits Abraham's origin in the east (11:28, 31; 12:4,5), his sojourn in Egypt (12:10, 11, 14; 13:1), Abraham is related primarily to the middle Palestinian area in the vicinity of Bethel (12:8; 13:3) and Shechem (12:6), and to the southern area in the Negeb (12:9; 13:1, 20:1), at Gerar (20:1), Beersheba (21:31, 32, 33; 22:19), Hebron (23:1), Mamre (13:18; 14:13; 18:1), and Machpela (23:9; 25:9) where his grave is. His connection with the Bethel area is based on very meager traditions and probably is the result of an effort by later writers to associate Abraham with all of the major cult centers.[107] Since only one very brief appearance account places him at Shechem, it is impossible to think of it as the major location of the Abraham traditions.

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[105] Translation of אביר יעקב by Alt, KS, p. 25.

[106] Cf. Jepsen, p. 148.

[107] Gunkel, p. 167; also, see Cassuto who notes the parallel between the location of Abraham "east of Bethel" and the conquest of Ai "east of Bethel" (Josh. 8:9) and then says: "Scripture intended to present us here through the symbolic conquest of Abraham with a kind of forecast of what would happen to his descendants later." A Commentary on Genesis, Part II (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, n.d.), p. 305.

It seems probable that Abraham is primarily associated with southern Palestine. The question now is, with which cult center there, were his traditions primarily related? His sojourn in Gerar seems to be a duplication of the legend originally belonging to the Isaac traditions.[108] The account of the oath sworn by Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba is probably a duplication of Gen. 26:26ff. in which Isaac is the chief character. Zimmerli reasons that it is more likely that a story such as this would have moved from the lesser important figure to the more important.[109] This leaves Hebron, Mamre, and Machpelah which are all in very close proximity to one another as the original location of the Abraham traditions.[110]

The tribe which was given Hebron as a possession was Caleb.[111] The Calebites were not considered a part of the twelve tribe confederation of the sons of Jacob[112] but were related to other southern tribes such as the Kenizites who were themselves related to the Edomites (Gen. 36:11, 42).[113] Regardless of the fact that they were very loosely related to the official amphictyony in the period of the Judges, it is clear that the Calebites were the people who were the most closely related to the Hebron area and thus the most likely bearers of the Abraham tradition.[114] Meyer says that

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[108] Walther Zimmerli, Geschichte und Tradition von Beersheba im Alten Testament, Inaugural-Dissertation (Göttingen, 1932), p. 17; Klaus Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte? (Neu Kirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), p. 140.

[109] Zimmerli, Beersheba, p. 17. Note that 22:19 is dependent upon 21:31ff.; see Gunkel, p. 239 and Meyer, p. 259.

[110] Alt, KS, p. 54; Jepsen, p. 143; Meyer, p. 261.

[111] Num. 13:17ff.; Deut. 1:22-46; Josh. 14:6-15.

[112] Gen. 29:31-30:24; 49:1-27; Num. 26:4-51.

[113] Cf. Noth, Israel, p. 65.

[114] Jepsen, p. 145; Alt, KS, p. 54.

Abraham was an old Calebite hero,[115] and Alt implies a relationship between the Calebites and the Abraham traditions before entrance into the land.[116]

The most serious objection which may be raised against this is that it is difficult to understand how Abraham could have become such an important figure in the patriarchal history while the tribe who bore his traditions was left out of the twelve tribe amphictyony. The reason for this is that the tribe of Caleb did not bring the Abraham traditions into the later amphictyony. The transfer of the Abraham traditions to another tribe took place in the next stage in historical process and so will be discussed below.

The cultic legend most clearly associated with Mamre is the account of the appearance of three deities to Abraham in Gen. 18. Meyer says that, associated with a holy tree at Mamre, there is an old legend which tells of a meal shared there by four gods. One of these gods was Abraham, but in the later Yahwistic tradition his divine character has disappeared, and the three gods have become mysterious strangers.[117] Alt, on the other hand, believes that the figure of the patriarch, Abraham, was added by invading tribes to an older localized legend which told of a meal shared by three deities at this place.[118] Gunkel, however, believes that the absence of wine from the meal, when this was and is one of the largest wine producing localities in Palestine, is one reason (among others) for thinking that this legend was not originally localized at Mamre/Hebron but may have been carried there by nomadic tribes.[119] Whether it was originally a local legend or one associated with nomadic tribes, it is the common opinion that this legend was eventually related to Mamre and to the tribes that lived in this area.

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[115] Nachbarstämme, p. 262.

[116] In tracing the tradition history of the Mamre cultic legend in Gen. 18, Alt distinguishes between a pre-Israelite stratum which did not include mention of Abraham and an early Israelite stratum marked by the introduction of the figure of Abraham who was the patron deity of the previously nomadic tribe, KS, p. 61.

[117] Nachbarstämme, p. 264.

[118] KS, p. 61.

[119] Genesis, p. 200. Westermann seems to support this view when he

It is possible that the cultic legend(s) in Gen. 15, which is not directly connected with any location in the text, was also originally associated with the Abraham traditions, perhaps even before the settlement of the land.[120] If so it could well have been localized at Mamre at an early date and lost its connection with this locale in the course of the attempt by the later tradition to associate Abraham with northern cult sites. Further inquiry into the tradition history of both Gen. 18 and 15 can be made only after these passages have been subjected to a form analysis. (See below.) It is sufficient to note at this point that there are strong traditions connecting the figure of Abraham to the cult site at Mamre/Hebron and that the most likely bearer of these traditions in the early period of tribal settlement is the tribe of Caleb. Mamre may be the starting point for the tradition history of Gen. 18 and possibly 15.

c. The Isaac Traditions

The original location of the Isaac traditions is now much easier to determine. All of the Isaac legends are related to the southern part of Palestine below Hebron. The chief places are Beersheba (21:14, 31, 32, 33; 22:19; 26:23), Beerlahairoi (24:62; 25:11), and Gerar (26:1, 6). The major traditions telling of the oath sworn with Abimelech, of the appearance of Yahweh to Isaac, and of the birth of Jacob and Esau are all related to Beersheba, and so even though the remembrance of his dwelling at Beerlahairoi

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finds the original setting of this narrative within the family. *FAT*, p. 19.

[120] Alt, *KS*, pp. 66f.; Noth, *ÜP*, p. 58.

[121] His tomb is located at Mamre (35:27), but the secondary connection of Jacob's grave with this Abrahamic area makes this tradition also very questionable. Other minor well locations in the south are: 26:20, 21, 22.

may be valid,[122] the most advisable conclusion is that Beersheba is the most important location of the figure of Isaac.[123]

It is a great deal more difficult to determine the tribe which originally bore the Isaac traditions. The tribe of Simeon seems to have possessed the land in this area (Judg. 1:17 reports that Simeon took possession of Hormah in the vicinity of Beersheba),[124] but its land was not clearly distinguished from that of Judah (Josh. 19:1, 9). In addition, the tribe of Simeon was probably already scattered abroad at the time of the later amphictyony (Gen. 49:5ff.) making it exceedingly difficult to say with certainty to which area and cult site it was originally related.

Even greater problems are raised by the tenuous connection of Simeon with the Isaac traditions. Simeon was presumably located in the vicinity of Beersheba in the south, but the Isaac traditions, strangely, seem to play a much larger role in the northern traditions of the house of Joseph[125] than in the traditions of the strong southern tribe of Judah which is closely associated with Simeon. One possible way the Isaac traditions could have been implanted in the north by the tribe of Simeon is given in Gen. 34. The tribes of Simeon and Levi capture the city of Shechem after a dispute over the marriage of their sister, Dinah, to a Shechemite. Here, in what is generally recognised as a genuine old tradition, the tribe of Simeon seems to have established itself at least for a short while in the heart of the later Josephite area.[126] At this time the Isaac traditions could have been established in the north at Shechem. Against this already rather tenuous view, however, is the fact that Isaac never visits Shechem for any reason as do both Abraham and Jacob. It is also very strange that Beersheba would continue to be visited by the northern people (see Amos 5:5, 8:14) on religious pilgrimages if the Isaac traditions were established at a cult site in the Northern Kingdom.

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[122] Zimmerli, Beersheba, p. 22; opposing this, see esp. Meyer, p. 253.

[123] Ibid., p. 17; Alt, KS, p. 54; Jepsen, p. 143.

[124] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 58.

[125] See Am. 7:9, 16; also 5:5; 8:14, and according to Zimmerli also perhaps Hos. 4:15, Beersheba, p. 3. Also, the prophet Elijah from the Northern Kingdom came back to Beersheba when he was in flight (I Kg. 19:3ff.); the sons of Samuel were judges at Beersheba (I Sam. 8:2).

There is also the possibility that the continued prominence of Isaac in the north was due to this pilgrimage to Beersheba, but then the reason for this pilgrimage has to be established.[127]

Jepsen believes that the attempt to make Simeon the bearer of the Isaac traditions fails because the connection of this tribe with the southern region in Josh. 19:1 is not authentic.[128] The relation of Simeon to the southern tribe of Judah does make it reasonably certain, however, that what was left of the tribe in the later period was in the south. This still, however, does not establish a direct relationship of Simeon with Beersheba, the center of the Isaac traditions.

Jepsen suggests that the tribe of Joseph originated in the vicinity of Beersheba and eventually carried the Isaac traditions into the north. In support of this he says that if Abraham is associated with Caleb, and Jacob with Reuben, then it is quite likely that the Joseph tribes could have borne the Isaac traditions; if one of the tribes was in Egypt then the most likely would be Joseph whose home would have originally been in southern Palestine in the area of Beersheba; in 46:1 Jacob still goes into Egypt from Beersheba; if the Isaac traditions were suppressed as they seem to have been, then it is logical that it should have been done by the Josephites since it is the figure of Joseph which becomes prominent in these early traditions.[129] The occasion of the invasion into the central Palestinian region by the Josephites from Egypt would have provided the opportunity for the unification of the Jacob and Isaac traditions. This would illuminate the reason for the appearance of Joseph in the genealogy as one of the last two sons of Jacob.

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[126] Zimmerli, Beersheba, p. 34; Jepsen, p. 31; also, Noth, Stämme, p. 77. Eduard Nielsen, Shechem (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1955), pp. 242ff.

[127] Cf. Alt, KS, p. 56.

[128] Jepsen, p. 144.

The major objection to this view is that the figure of Joseph seems to have originally belonged to the middle Palestinian area. Meyer finds in the lists of Thutmoses III the name of a Canaanite city which he believes can be translated as Joseph-el. When this is added to the fact that the grave of Joseph is traditionally in the vicinity of Shechem (Jos. 24:32) he is led to the conclusion that the name Joseph was originally connected to an old hero saga which was probably localized at Shechem and taken over by the so-called Joseph tribes after coming into the land.[130] Mowinckel more recently has maintained essentially the same view saying that Joseph was a protector god (*weli*) localized probably in the area of his grave, which the newly arrived tribes began to worship along with other people already living there. Gradually he came to be considered by them as their father and patron. He asserts that we know nothing more about him than the location of his grave.[131]

This would, however, still leave the strange relationship between the northern tribes and the southern Palestinian Isaac/Beersheba tradition unexplained. Schunck believes that the tribe of Ephraim antedates the "House of Joseph."[132] Though he recognizes that this tribe received its name from the geographical locale and thus could not have become a formal entity until after the settlement of the land, he believes that the later tribe consisted of the various groups that were originally from the area of Beersheba and had undergone a period of servitude in Egypt. He differs from Jepsen's view of the early history of these northern tribes only inasmuch as he does not believe that a tribe with the specific name of Joseph can be connected with the southern Palestinian area. He prefers to call them only "Isaac clans" (Isaaksippen).[133] These clans were only very loosely organized after their exodus from Egypt and continued to remain so until they were drawn together by the common desire to invade the land in central Palestine. The older pre-Egyptian Isaac traditions were remembered by these people, however, and later constituted the connecting link between Ephraimite/Josephite tribes and the figure of Isaac.

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[129] Jepsen, p. 145. See also, Otto Kaiser, "Stammesgeschichtliche Hintergrund der Josephgeschichte," *V.T.*, Vol. 10 (1960), p. 9; also supported in a slightly altered form by Schunck, *Benjamin*, p. 18; and by Zimmerli, *Beersheba*, p. 34.

[130] *Nachbarstämme*, p. 292.

[131] Mowinckel, "Rachel und Leah," p. 144. See also, E. Täubler, who traces the figure of Joseph back to the old tribe of Machir that lived east of the Jordan; "Die Epoche der Richter," *Biblische Studien*, ed. by H.-J. Zobel (Tübingen; J.C.B. Mohr, 1958).

The last question to be considered here is whether or not any old Isaac cultic legends have been preserved in Genesis. Yahweh appeared to Isaac at Beersheba according to Gen. 26:23ff., but, as will be shown below, this short "notice" scarcely constitutes a genuine old cultic legend. Meyer believes that Gen. 22 was originally a legend associated with the cult of the deity called "the fear of Isaac" and told of the replacing of human sacrifice with animals. An example of this type of legend is offered by the tale of Iphigenia in Greek mythology which tells of how the goddess, Artemis (or her father in another version) saved her from being sacrificed, and how she later became a priestess of Artemis. Unfortunately, however, the location of this legend is unknown, except to say that it was purportedly a three-day journey from Beersheba.[134]

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[132] Benjamin, pp. 13f.; rejects Noth's view that the tribe of Joseph antedated the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh due to the late character of the genealogies on which Noth bases his opinion.

[133] Ibid., pp. 15ff.

The present form of Gen. 22 presupposes a relationship between Abraham and Isaac and so belongs to a later stage of the tradition history. It is possible, however, that it could have originally been the primary cultic legend associated with the figure of Isaac; but this matter cannot be finally settled until an analysis of the form of the passage has been made. (See below, Ch. III, C.)

The conclusion concerning the origin of the Isaac traditions is then that they were originally associated with the cult center of Beersheba and borne by descendants of Isaac who, after a period of servitude in Egypt, became the tribe of Ephraim and eventually members of the House of Joseph. Gen. 22 is tentatively accepted as the primary cultic legend within the Isaac traditions.

2. Tribal Movements Leading to the Twelve Tribe Amphictyony

The discovery of the historical and political significance of the tribal lists and genealogies constitutes one of the major advances of modern Biblical scholarship. As Martin Noth has shown, they tell us much about the history of the tribes before their unification into the twelve tribe amphictyony. One of the oldest passages which enumerates the tribes of Israel is the blessing of Jacob in Gen. 49:1-27. In this passage Noth distinguishes between three groups of tribes on the basis of the sequence in which they are mentioned: the Leah tribes at the beginning (Reuben, Simeon-Levi, Judah, Zebulon, and Issachar), at the end, the Rachael tribes

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[134] Meyer rejects Gunkel's suggestion that it was located in the wilderness of Judah at a place called Jeruel (*Genesis*, p. 241) since there is no evidence of a cult site in that area, *Nachbarstämme*, p. 255.

(Joseph and Benjamin), and in between the sons of Leah's maid, Zilpah (Gad and Asher) and the sons of Rachel's maid, Bilhah (Dan and Naphtali).[135] Since these three groupings do not correspond to any separate geographical locations or political affiliations during the later period of the kingdom, it can be assumed that they reflect earlier stages in the Israelite tribal history. Now the evidence for these earlier configurations will be examined.

a. Early Movements in the East Jordan and Central Palestinian Areas

In view of the fact that the tribe of Levi is not assigned any land in the later traditions of the settlement, eventually being replaced by Gad in the later genealogy in Num. 26, and in view of the fact that Reuben and Simeon both have very little importance in the later traditions, Noth believes that the group of Leah tribes first came together to form a six tribe amphictyony before the arrival of the tribes bearing the Exodus traditions.[136] Simeon and Levi were related to Shechem at an early date (Gen. 34); Reuben may have dwelt in the Benjaminite area; Zebulon and Issachar were located in the later period in southern Galilee and could have been there in the earlier period; Judah was settled in the mountains to the south.[137] This amphictyony would have been established during the Amarna period[138] and probably located at Shechem until the tribes were pushed out of central Palestine.[139]

Jepsen accepts Noth's thesis of the existence of a Leah amphictyony in the central Palestinian area. In his view this was established in a period of general movement into that area by tribes from the south such as

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[135] Cf. Gen. 29:31ff. Noth, *Stämme*, p. 8.

[136] *Ibid*., pp. 75ff.

[137] *Ibid*., p. 77.

[138] *Ibid*., p. 78.

[139] *Ibid*., p. 80. In one of the Amarna letters (EA245) an Egyptian vassal indicates that cities in the vicinity of Shechem were under attack. Since the attackers were doubtless the 'apiru, this may have been just prior to the establishment of an 'apiru confederacy at Shechem. *ANET*, P. 486.

Simeon and Levi who overthrew Shechem, and tribes from the east such as Reuben which was originally located in the vicinity of Peniel. He further believes that at a later time the center of this amphictyony was moved from Shechem to Bethel (perhaps as a result of increasing pressure from the west).[140] This would help explain the reason Jeroboam I reverted back to Bethel as the cult center of the Northern Kingdom after the break-up of the Davidic Kingdom. Further evidence of the movement of the cult center from Shechem might be offered by the ancient tradition of a pilgrimage from Shechem to Bethel in Gen. 35:1-7.[141]

Noth believes that there is an old cultic tradition of the worship of the God of Israel (Gen. 33:20) at Shechem and that this early six tribe amphictyony had already assumed the name of Israel. In his view, the reference to the conquest of "Israel" on the Merneptah stele can be explained as a reference to the destruction of this early six tribe amphictyony. In that case the tribes of this amphictyony would have been dispersed not too long before the arrival of the Isaac clans from Egypt. Reuben would have most likely returned to the east Jordanian region, with perhaps no desire ever to go back into the troublesome central Palestinian area (Num. 32:5); Simeon and Levi[142] would have been scattered probably throughout the southern region; Judah may then have moved farther southward (cf. Gen. 38) to a less disturbed mountainous region where it eventually came into contact with an amphictyony in the Hebron area. (See below.)

During this period the Jacob traditions borne by the tribe of Reuben would have come into contact with the cult centers in central Palestine. The old cultic legend of Bethel was now joined to the Jacob traditions so that Jacob becomes the chief character.[143] The process toward the unification of the figures of Jacob and Isaac may also have begun at this time at Shechem if it is possible that the tribe of Simeon originally came from Beersheba and bore the Isaac traditions.[144] At least the association of Jacob with the cult center at Shechem would have begun at this time.

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[140] Jepsen, p. 148.

[141] The antiquity of this pilgrimage tradition has been shown by A. Alt, though he does not say when it originated. "Die Wallfahrt von Sichem nach Bethel," KS, p. 87.

[142] Cf. Meyer, p. 232.

b. Early Tribal Movements in Southern Palestine

It has already been established that the Abraham traditions were originally located at Mamre and the Isaac traditions at Beersheba. The sequence of the events in the history of the southern traditions is anything but certain, especially with regard to their chronological relationship to the events transpiring in central Palestine.[145] According to Jepsen the earliest period of history in this region was characterized by the invasion of the first tribes bearing the Abraham traditions and the Isaac traditions and their settlement at Mamre and Beersheba respectively. Then pressure of some kind pushed them southward, the early Abraham tribes going into the Negeb and the Isaac (Joseph) tribes going into Egypt. At a later time the tribe of Caleb led the clans back to the Hebron area where an amphictyony was established. The tribe of Judah which probably was settling in this same area to the north of Hebron eventually became a member of this southern band.[146]

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[143] Jepsen, p. 148.

[144] Zimmerli, *Beersheba*, p. 32.

[145] See T. J. Meek who dates the invasion by the Joseph tribes in central Palestine and the establishment of Shechem amphictyony by Joshua around 1400 B.C., and the invasion of the land by tribes bearing the Exodus traditions over a century later from the south; *Hebrew Origins* (N.Y.: Harpers, 1936), pp. 25, 28, 34; see also, W. F. Albright, *The Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, 58 (April, 1935), pp. 10-18. Rowley sufficiently opposes this view when he writes, "Why the Joseph tribes, who on his view were never with Moses, should associate the beginnings of their Yahwism with that leader, while the Leah tribes, who were with him, should not, is left completely unexplained." The view ascribing the invasion of Canaan to a two-fold movement, the first being by the Leah tribes in the south and the second being by the Joseph (Isaac) tribes bearing the Exodus traditions in central Palestine stated by Rowley and others will be followed in the account below; *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 147ff.

The existence of an amphictyony at Hebron at this time and throughout much of the period of the Judges has been maintained by a number of scholars.[147] Noth says that this group consisted of Judah, Simeon, Caleb, Othniel, Jerachmeel, and Cain. Judah and Simeon, he maintains, belonged to both the northern and the southern organizations and he finds precedent for such dual membership in the amphictyonies of Greece.[148]

The membership of the tribe of Judah in a southern amphictyony at Hebron as well as in the northern amphictyony provides the historical link between the Abraham traditions and the Jacob/Israel traditions. When the Judaites became closely associated with the Calebites in the covenantal society, then the Abraham traditions which dominated the Hebron amphictyony passed into the tribe of Judah and through the tribe of Judah into the northern traditions of Isaac and Jacob.[149] This would probably have happened after the invasion of the Isaac clans into central Palestine, and it is this event that must now be examined. It constitutes the third and final stage in the history of the patriarchal traditions.

c. Later Movements in the Central Palestinian Area

The task remaining is to determine how the various individual patriarchal figures came to be united in one genealogy. To do this it is necessary to examine the final major phase in the tribal movements leading up to the establishment of the great Israelite amphictyony. This phase begins with the movement of the tribes bearing the Exodus traditions into the land east of the Jordan just prior to their invasion of central Palestine. The objective here can only be to present a basic outline of these tribal movements as a background for understanding the way in which the individual patriarchal traditions came to be unified.

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[146] Jepsen, pp. 146, 150.

[147] Alt, KS, p. 34; Noth, Stämme, pp. 107f.; Mowinckel, "Rahelstämme . . ." p. 138; see also, Meyer, p. 262; Murray Newman, People of the Covenant (N.Y.: Abingdon, 1962).

[148] Stämme, p. 108.

[149] Alt, KS, p. 55.

(1) The unification of Isaac and Jacob

It has already been noted that the unification of these two patriarchal figures could have begun in the old Leah amphictyony when the southern tribe of Simeon bearing the Isaac traditions came into contact with the Reubenites bearing the Jacob traditions. This is a very tenuous possibility, however, and there is another later occasion when it is more likely that this unification took place.

According to Jepsen, the Jacob and Isaac traditions came together when the Joseph tribes joined together with the Reubenites during the invasion of the land west of the Jordan.[150] It may be possible to say something more about this process of unification than Jepsen has done, however. According to Bright, "The memory of a tribal center east of Jordan is preserved in early poems (especially Num. 23:24) and also in the tradition behind the Deuteronomic history (Deut., chs. 1-4)."[151] Though he acknowledges the lack of evidence, he conjectures that a number of tribes in this region were probably added to those which had come up from Egypt. The likelihood of the presence of the Reubenites in this region together with the location here of a known Israelite cult center at Peniel adds some substance to both of these suggestions. It would have been both necessary and expedient for the newly arrived tribes to have enlisted the support of other semi-nomadic tribes in the area when they began their seizure of land. There are thus some grounds for seriously considering the possibility of an early association between the Reubenites and the Isaac clans.

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[150] Jepsen, p. 150; also Kaiser, p. 10. Jepsen, however, thinks of the six tribe amphictyony as still in existence, although according to Noth it had probably been destroyed by the Egyptians shortly before.

[151] John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 126.

As was indicated above, the legend of Jacob's struggle with the angel probably came to be localized at Peniel with the arrival of the Reubenites in this region, making Peniel the chief cult center for the Reubenites before their first invasion of the west. After the fall of the Leah amphictyony this cult center would probably have been revived, if indeed it had ever fallen into disuse. This would have been the most likely place for a covenant between the Reubenites and the newly arrived tribes from Egypt to have been concluded, and consequently the most likely place for the coming together of the Isaac traditions and the Jacob traditions. The figure of Isaac provided the genealogical link joining these hitherto widely separated groups. He became the grandfather rather than the father of this confederation of tribes because the tribes bearing his traditions were moving into the area of the old Leah amphictyony where the traditions of Jacob were dominant. The Exodus traditions may also have largely replaced the Isaac traditions in the minds of the "Isaac clans." So Jacob became the immediate ancestor and Isaac the father of Jacob. The new tribes came to be considered as sons of Jacob by another wife. This leads to the next problem: the origin of the union of Joseph and Benjamin around the common mother, Rachel.

It should be added at this point, that any attempt to speak in detail of these early tribal movements east of the Jordan must be highly conjectural.

This is especially well illustrated by K.-D. Schunck's view of the origin of the association of Rachael tribes. As noted above, he argues that it is impossible to speak of the existence of either a Joseph tribe or an Ephraimite tribe before the settlement of the land west of the Jordan. In this period there is only a group of very loosely organized tribes in this area, some of which came up from Egypt; these he calls "Isaaksippen," accepting Jepsen's view of the origin of the tribes of the Egyptian oppression. His view, however, adds support to the conjecture that there was some type of tribal coalition before the invasion of the west. At this time there were not only Isaac clans in this area but also tribes from the north-eastern Syrian wilderness which were to later form the tribe of Benjamin. The common desire to invade the land, combined with the appearance of a strong military leader (Joshua), brought these tribes into a type of loosely organized and probably temporary goal-oriented confederation prior to their entrance into the west.[152] This coalition then became much stronger when a cult center was established at Gilgal by these tribes after crossing the Jordan.[153] Since the tribe of Reuben was also in this area at this time, as was shown above, and must in any case be considered as closely related to the later Ephraimite (Josephite) tribesmen by virtue of their common possession of the Jacob traditions, it is quite possible that the tribe of Reuben was a part of this early coalition east of the Jordan. The first objective of this coalition may well have been the conquest of the east Jordan area, and in this the tribe of Reuben would have played a large role. This would explain the reason for its insistence on remaining in the east when the other tribes were moving westward (Num. 32). In this early coalition, of course, the distinctions between the "Leah tribes" and "Rachael tribes" had probably not yet been made. This would not have happened until the invading tribes had moved into central Palestine in the vicinity of Bethel and Shechem and revived the old Leah amphictyony.[154] From the later perspective it would have seemed appropriate to the remaining Leah tribes to consider the powerful new tribes of Benjamin and Joseph (Ephraim) as the late sons of the most beloved wife of their father, Jacob.[155]

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[152] "Somit hätten die den Stamm Ephraim formierenden Sippen zu Beginn der Landnahme den später Benjamin bildenden Sippen in ihrer Herkunft, in ihrem Aufbau und in ihren Zielen sehr stark entsprochen. Beide stellten sie Sippengruppen dar, die sich von grösseren Verbände getrennt hätten, die, nur lose miteinander verbunden, das gemeinsame Ziel verfolgten, im Westjordanland Siedlungsraum zu gewinnen und die dabei etwa auf den gleichen Raum des, "Gebirges Ephraim" zwischen Sichem und Jerusalem zielten." Benjamin, p. 16, also pp. 18ff. where examples are given of such confederations from ancient Greece.

[153] Ibid., pp. 39ff. Noth's argument that these early conquest traditions belonged originally to only the tribe of Benjamin (History of Israel, p. 75) rests upon the single presupposition that the geographical location of the battle determines the tribe to which the tradition originally belonged. Since most of these battles in Josh. 1-11 took place in Benjaminite territory he concludes that they were originally only Benjaminite traditions. It would be more accurate, however, to say that these traditions were passed down in cult centers located within the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. It is impossible to conclude from this that the only clans

The traditio-historical results of this period of activity would then have been that the tribes from the south bearing the new Exodus traditions and the older Isaac traditions came into contact with the tribe of Reuben

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which participated in this were the ancestors of the Benjaminites. This is especially true in light of Noth's own contention that most of these tribes did not acquire their names until after the settlement. It is thus quite possible that a coalition of tribes, as Schunck maintains, consisting of elements of both the Benjaminites and Isaac clans participated in this original invasion with the Isaac clans later moving on westward. Such an early coalition would explain the view of the later tradition that Joseph and Benjamin were close brothers. If the invasion of the land had been accomplished by each tribe completely independently, one of the most powerful motives for this early unification would be eliminated.

[154] For the Leah tribes as the nucleus of the later amphictyony, see Noth, *Stämme*, p. 76.

[155] It is possible that the unification of the Joseph and Benjamin tribes around the common mother, Rachael, began very early if Schunck's view of Rachael as the tribal deity of the tribe of Benjamin is correct. (p. 12.)

bearing the Jacob traditions as well as the traditions of the six tribe Israel amphictyony (now in disarray). These Isaac clans also came into contact with tribes from the Syrian wilderness who had arrived in the area more recently. These varied tribes were drawn together by the common purpose first of taking possession of the land east of the Jordan and then of invading the land west of the Jordan. They probably formed some type of loose coalition that would have been the occasion for the beginning of the fusion of their traditions. Peniel is a likely site for this to have taken place, though soon after crossing the Jordan, Gilgal became the chief cult center and later Bethel and Shechem. During this period the Isaac and Jacob traditions would have been coming together. No specific cultic legends concerned with relating Isaac and Jacob have been passed down, however.[156]

(2) The Unification of Abraham with Isaac and Jacob

It is widely acknowledged today that Shechem played an important role in the early life of the Israelite amphictyony.[157] Exactly what role it played and how reliable the traditions such as Josh. 24 are which purport to come from the time the tribal organization was located at Shechem, is another question.[158] It is nevertheless safe to conclude with Noth that some type of festival was celebrated there not too long after the coalition of Isaac, Reubenite, and Benjaminite clans entered the central Palestinian area. At this time the old Leah group formerly located at Shechem was to some extent revived and then expanded.[159]

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[156] This is done chiefly through the story of the birth of Jacob which takes place in Beersheba (Gen. 25).

[157] Noth, *Stämme*, p. 70; Bright, *Israel*, p. 126; and many others.

[158] See Nielsen, *Shechem*; G. E. Wright, *Shechem* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1965).

[159] *Stämme*, p. 70; see also Kaiser, who contends that there is genuine old tradition behind Josh. 24, p. 12.

It is doubtful that Judah and Simeon played any significant role in the northern amphictyony at this time as their absence from the song of Deborah implies, and it is quite possible that the amphictyony only consisted of ten tribes.[160] But this still does not substantially affect Noth's contention that the Leah group reflects a tribal union that antedates the rise of the larger northern amphictyony and that the Leah tribes constituted the nucleus of this northern association. As he showed, these tribal groups can change their shape from time to time, and there is every reason to believe that Judah, at this time, was a member of an active amphictyony in the south at Hebron. It is not necessary to believe that her absence from the northern group meant that she had never belonged to it. It only meant that it had become more expedient for her to transfer her allegiance to another group. When such a change was made, the old affiliations would not simply be forgotten, however, but would remain quiescent until a new situation arose in which it was expedient to revive them. The old "Israel" tradition would have lived on in the northern amphictyony because it was originally located in the same area and at the same cult sites. Moreover, half of the members of the older association were members of the new. Judah and Simeon, though members of the southern group, could have retained memory of their affiliations with the northern tribes during most of the period of the Judges, and when Philistine pressure increased and reunification with the northern tribes became advisable this old relationship would have been revived. Thus Mowinckel is probably right in his opinion that the northern amphictyony during the era of the Judges contained only ten tribes and that the present twelve tribe system reflects the interests of Judah and the Davidic monarchy in establishing the "grossisraelitische Idee." He is wrong, however, in his contention that Judah was only then included for the first time in a system with the northern tribes. This relationship in the time of David was already an ancient one and had never been forgotten.[161]

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[160] Mowinckel, p. 137; Schunck, p. 52.

Because of the remembrance of the membership of the tribe of Judah in the old six tribe Israelite amphictyony and because of the likelihood of continued unrecorded contact between Judah and the northern tribes while it was an active member of the Hebron amphictyony, it is possible that the Abraham traditions had begun to be assimilated into the Jacob/Isaac traditions soon after the settlement of central Palestine. Certainly the southern tribes became Yahweh worshippers during this early period, and this would have required some degree of community with the northern Yahwistic amphictyony. More than likely, however, the real impetus toward the unification of these figures into one genealogy did not come until shortly before or during the rise of the unified monarchy.

During this period a number of traditions came into existence relating Abraham to the Jacob/Isaac traditions and Isaac and Jacob to the Abraham traditions.[162] The figure of Abraham came to be associated probably for the first time with the northern cult centers of Shechem (Gen. 12:6-8) and Bethel (12:8; 13:2ff.). The major problem of unifying the figures of Jacob and Abraham was accomplished by placing Isaac between them as a connecting link. He was suitable for this position due to his original location in the south and his present association with the northern tribe of Ephraim. Since the connection between Jacob and Isaac had already become a part of northern tradition (see the oath formula used by Jacob in Gen. 31:53), the final step was to unify the Abraham-Isaac figures. The classic legend which resulted from this development is Gen. 22, an old Isaac cultic legend which now connects Abraham and Isaac by utilizing the motif of the threatened and delayed promise. Other traditions which grew out of this time are the connection of Abraham with Hagar which serves to explain the close relationship between Isaac and Ishmael, the connection of Jacob with Beersheba (46:1) which serves to connect the northern figure of Jacob with those Isaac clans which went down into Egypt, and the brief account of the appearance of Yahweh to Isaac at Beersheba in Gen. 26:23f. which replaces the original Isaac cultic legend now being used to connect him with the figure of Abraham (Gen. 22).

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[161] Mowinckel, p. 137.

[162] This is based upon Jepsen, p. 151.

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In summary it can be said then that the Jacob traditions were borne by the Reubenites who lived east of the Jordan, the Isaac traditions by the southern "Isaac clans" (proto-Josephites) who lived in the area of Beersheba originally before descending into Egypt, and the Abraham traditions by the Calebites who lived in the vicinity of Hebron. The traditions began coming together during the time when these tribes were moving into Palestine and forming coalitions. The Isaac clans came up from Egypt bearing both the Isaac and Exodus traditions and joined with the Reubenites and proto-Benjaminites east of the Jordan in order to invade the land west of the Jordan, and eventually established a larger amphictyony based upon the older six tribe Leah amphictyony which had been earlier destroyed by Merneptah. Now the new tribes of Benjamin and Joseph were added to the older Leah tribes with the explanation that they were sons of Jacob's beloved wife, Racheal. Such genealogical arrangement reflected superior strength of these newer tribes. In the south, Judah, which had been a former member of the Leah amphictyony, had become affiliated with an amphictyony at Hebron which included the Calebites. The Abraham traditions thus came into contact with the Jacob traditions in the tribe of Judah. The northern and southern amphictyonies seem to have maintained their independence of each other during most of the period of the Judges. There would have been no move to unite the traditions of Abraham with those of the northern tribes during this period. As the pressure from the Philistines and others grew heavier, however, it became advantageous for the northern and southern groups to unify. At this time the southern figure of Abraham is joined to the northern figure of Jacob through the use of the intermediate figure of Isaac, a southern figure whose traditions were now borne by tribes living in the north. With this, the genealogy of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was complete. It probably reached this final stage of development sometime shortly before or during the rise of the monarchy.

CHAPTER III

FORM ANALYSIS

Since the time of Gunkel it has been increasingly recognized that much of the material in Genesis existed in oral tradition long before it was fixed in writing. The form of these sagas while circulating in oral tradition was not akin to the complex narrative in which they now stand but was rather that of a short, independent, single account.[1] In order to understand the literary structure of this book it is then necessary to determine the original units of the text, i.e., the original independent oral sagas. To do this one must examine the connections which the relevant passage has with what comes before and after it to determine whether these connections are fundamental to the meaning of the story or are only the work of the narrator who placed the story in its context.[2]

Since every oral or literary form always exists in some specific passage which has its own content, the question about the form cannot be separated from the question about the content and meaning of the passage. A study of the form then necessarily leads into a study of the whole complex of concrete traditions out of which the individual passage has grown.[3] It is thus necessary for form analysis always to move back and forth between the specific, unique elements of the content and the general characteristics of a passage that can be abstracted for the purpose of comparison.

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[1] "Volkstümliche Sage besteht ihrer Natur nach in der Form der einzelnen Sage; erst später stellen Sammler mehrere solcher Sagen zusammen, oder gestalten Dichter daraus grössere künstlerische Gebilde." *Genesis*, p. XXXII.

[2] "Je selbständiger eine Erzählung ist, je sicherer ist sie in alter Form erhalten. Der 'Zusammenhang' aber, der zwischen den einzelnen Sagen besteht, ist in vielen Fällen späterer Herkunft, wenn nicht einfach eine Eintragung der Erklärer." *Ibid*., p. XXXIII.

[3] Cf. Georg Fohrer, "Tradition und Interpretation im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, 73 (1961), p. 1.

One aspect of form analysis thus requires the examination of the completely abstract structural elements of a given scene. Then the specific formulae found there which also occur in other passages must be distinguished; these formulae stand midway between the concrete and abstract. Connected closely with the analysis of the formulae is the analysis of the style. The style is more closely related to the specific content and yet is still capable of being abstracted. But the structure, formulae, and style cannot be analyzed apart from determining the unique content or meaning of the passage. So the abstracting and generalizing aspects of form analysis must be joined with an exegesis and interpretation of the content. This does not mean that every detail of the content must be explored; it only means that the content must be examined to a depth sufficient to disclose the relationship between the form and content. The correspondence of structural, formalistic, and stylistic characteristics in a number of different passages indicates the existence of a genre; the individual content of these passages may vary widely, however.[4]

The examination of the traditions behind a given genre should lead to knowledge of the situation in life (Sitz im Leben) where the genre originated. Then a study of the unique features of each passage should disclose the individual history of that passage.[5] The analysis of these passages will thus have three major intentions: (1) To uncover the structure of various genres; (2) to determine the origin of those structures; (3) to distinguish the historical stages of growth through which they have passed.

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[4] For a discussion of the relation between the abstract and concrete in form analysis, see; Klaus Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte?, pp. 16-26; Eberhard Lämmert, Bauformen des Erzählens (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955), esp. pp. 9-18.

[5] "Will man diese Geschichte kennen lernen, so setzt man zweckmässig bei den Varianten ein." Gunkel, Genesis, p. LXV.

A. Type I: The Oath

1. Determination of the Basic Textual Unit

The passages to be included in the first type are: Gen. 12:6, 7 (to be designated A-1), 26:23-25 (I), 28:10-22 (J-1), 35:9-16 (J-2), 17:1-27 (A-2). The first three of these are firmly connected with their contexts, while the last two are only very loosely connected.

A-1, I, and J-1 all begin with the person involved (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob respectively) leaving one place and coming to the site of the story (Shechem, Beersheba, Bethel, though Bethel remains unnamed until the conclusion). The conclusion of the story in 12:8 and 29:1 tells that the principal character continued on his journey. In 26:25 it is reported that Isaac pitched his tent at Beersheba indicating that he also lived for a while at the place where he had experienced the encounter with Yahweh, whereas Jacob and Abraham both move on. Since the following account of his covenant with Abimelech also takes place at Beersheba this phrase may be considered as not only the conclusion of the vision account but also the transition to the next episode. It is clear then that all three passages are at least separate "scenes" (Gunkel) in the larger narrative that take place at definite locations, and are clearly marked off from the preceding and proceeding events by transitional phrases.

J-2 is set off as a separate scene by the transitional phrase, "God appeared to Jacob again. . .," at the beginning (vs. 9), and at the end, "Then they journeyed from Bethel. . ." (vs. 16). In contrast to the transitions in A-1, I, and J-1 where it is provided by the actual movement of the primary character, the transition here seems more contrived. God simply appears "again" (עוד). The connection between the end of the vision account in vs. 15, and the following transitional verse is also very loose. Since Jacob is already at Bethel in 35:6-8, vs. 16 could provide the transition from vs. 8 to the next episode just as well as from vs. 15. In contrast to A-1, I, and J-1 which are single scenes in the narrative, important in their own right, J-2 appears as merely another occurrence which takes place while Jacob is at Bethel—as something else that happened—and is thus more loosely related to its context than the others.

There are no transitional phrases at all connecting A-2 with its immediate context. The opening statement does not mention the preceding events or the place where this scene occurs, but sets the stage for the following narrative by telling the age of Abraham. This comparatively lengthy narrative ends in vs. 27. The final verse of the account does not provide a transition to the following event, however. Chapter 18 also does not begin by picking up the narrative thread from 17:27 but rather simply gives an introduction to the narrative which follows. There are thus no literary connections between ch. 17 and its context. Several distinct sections are recognizable within this chapter: in vss. 1-14 the promise is given and the desired response prescribed (circumcision); in vss. 15-21 the specific promise of a son to Sarah and a promise to Ishmael are given; vss. 22-27 tell of the fulfillment of the rite of circumcision by Abraham in obedience to the command in vs. 10. It has long been recognized that this chapter belongs to the later Priestly (P) tradition[6] and was added to Genesis at a later date. The long process of its composition seems to have resulted in the combination of elements that may have been originally independent.[7] Since the section composed of vss. 1-14 does not depend in any way on the subsequent verses and compares in form and content to A-1, I, J-1, and J-2, it will be considered as an independent unit, but the relationship of this section to the other parts of the narrative will be considered.

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[6] Gunkel, pp. 264ff.; Otto Procksch, Die Genesis (3rd ed.; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924), p. 472, and more recently, Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, p. 192.

2. General Characteristics of the Form

The passages categorized as Type I share some common structural characteristics: (1) The principal characters in each scene are God and one man; (2) only God speaks in the actual encounter; (3) man either responds to the words of God with words and/or actions, or he is instructed as to what his response should be.

There is also a parallel content in each of these legends; the central event in all of them is the giving of a promise by God. They fully merit the title, promise narratives.

3. An Analysis of the Parts of the Form

The first step in the procedure is to outline a translation of the text so that the parallel structure of these legends becomes visible and then to clarify any textual problems that may be of significance for this investigation.

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[7] See von Rad, especially, who notes the disparity between vss. 1-14 which he believes to be a priestly parallel to the Yahwistic account in 15:7ff., and vss. 15-22, which correspond to the following J account in 18:1ff. (pp. 192, 197.)

	Gen. 28:10-22	Gen. 12:6, 7	Gen. 26:23, 24
Occasion:	Jacob left Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he happened upon a certain place and remained there for the night because the sun had set. From the stones in the place, he took (one) and placed it under his head, and in that place he lay down to sleep.	And Abraham passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh (and the Canaanites were still in the land)	And from there he went to Beersheba
Appearance:	And he dreamed and behold, a stairway was set on the earth and the top of it reached to the heavens; and behold, angels of Elohim were ascending and descending on it! And lo, Yahweh was standing beside it, and he said,	And Yahweh appeared to Abraham and said,	And Yahweh appeared to him that night and said to him,
Promise:	"I am Yahweh, God of Abraham, your father, and God of Isaac. The land upon which you are lying, I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth: you shall spread out west and east and north and south, and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your offspring. And behold, I am with you, and will protest you wherever you go and shall bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have accomplished that which I have promised to you."	"To your descendants I will give this land."	I am the God of Abraham, thy father, fear not for I am with you and I will bless you, and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."
Response:	And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely, Yahweh is in this place and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven."		
	And Jacob rose in the morning and took the stone which he had put under his head	And he built an altar there to Yahweh	And he built an altar there and called on the name

and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place, Bethel, but Luz had been the name of that town at the first.	who had appeared to him. Then Jacob made a vow saying, "If Yahweh Elohim remains with me and protects me in this way that I am going, and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear so that I come back with health and well-being to my father's house, then Yahweh will be my God.	of Yahweh, and he pitched his tent there.

	Gen. 17:1-14	Gen. 35:9-15
Occasion:	When Abraham was ninety nine years old,	. . . .when he had come from Paddan-aram. . .
Appearance:	Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him,	And God appeared to Jacob again...and he blessed him
Promise:	"I am El Shaddai. Walk before me and be blameless, and I will grant my covenant between me and you and I will multiply you exceedingly.	And God said to him: "Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be called by thy name Jacob, but Israel will be your name, and he called his name Israel.
(Response:	And Abram fell on his face) and God spoke to him saying, Behold my covenant is with you and you will be the father of a multitude of nations, And your name will be no longer be called, Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. I will uphold my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, Canaan as an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.	And God said to him: "I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and an assembly of nations shall come forth from you and kings shall spring from you. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you; and to your descendants after you I will give the land.
Response:	And God said to Abraham, as for you, you shall keep my covenant and your descendants after you throughout their generations. And this is my covenant between me and you and between your descendants after you,	And God went up from it, (i.e.) the place in which he had spoken to him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken to him, and he poured out a drink offering upon it and he

which you shall keep:
every male among you shall be circumcised, and you
shall be circumcised (in) the flesh of your
foreskins, and it will serve as a sign of the
covenant between me and you.
At the age of eight days, every male among you,
throughout your generations, whether born in your
house or bought with your money from any foreigner
who is not from your descendants, shall be
circumcised, and then my covenant will be as
an eternal covenant in your flesh.
Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised
in the flesh of his foreskin, that person
shall be cut off from my people (for) he has
broken my covenant.

poured oil on it.
And he called the name of the place there where
God had spoken to him, Bethel.

Textual Problems

In the discussion below only those textual variants will be discussed which substantially affect the form and content of the passages.

Gen. 12:6, 7

vs. 6: אֵלוֹן מוֹרֶה: In place of, אֵלוֹן, the Targum has מֵישְׁרֵי, plains, probably in an attempt to disassociate Abraham from the sacred oak which was considered pagan in later times. (Cf. John Skinner, *Genesis*, *International Critical Commentary* (Rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 245. In place of מוֹרֶה, the LXX has τὴν ὑψηλήν which is probably "high place" (מָרוֹם). The Syriac and Symmacus have מַמְרֵא as in 18:1. This variation among so many sources is probably an indication of the uncertainty of many traditions on the location of this cult site. Since this places Abraham outside of his normal region, this textual uncertainty increases the probability that Abraham has been associated with Shechem only by a later tradition. This could have occurred when the traditionists wanted to present Abraham as entering the land from the north after he had been related to the Mesopotamian tradition.

Gen. 26:23, 24

vs. 24: עַבְדִּי : The LXX reads אָבִיךָ instead. Since this word is also used with reference to Abraham in 18:2, 5, the MT is to be preferred.

Gen. 28:10-22

vs. 11: פגע : It is translated here as "happen upon," but the word carries more the connotation of "encounter" or even "strike," Cf. A. Dillman, *Genesis*, II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 225. It is used with reference to the encounter of Jacob with the angels at Mahanaim (32:2). It also can carry the connotation of "find" as seen in Ex. 23:4. It generally refers to at least some type of encounter where two objects or persons actually touch one another as seen in Judg. 8:21, 15:12, 18:25 where it refers to a hostile attack or as in Jer. 7:16, Jb. 21:13 where it refers to an entreaty. Because of the strong connotation of physical contact this word carries it could be translated in this context as "stumbled upon."

vs. 13: עָלָיו : The literal meaning is "beside him," but the reference here is not to Jacob but to the masculine noun סֻלָּם. It thus should be translated as "beside it" [contrary to E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), p. 218; Skinner, p. 377; P. Volz and W. Rudolph, *Der Elohist als Erzähler, ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik*? (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933), p. 75; who have "beside him" and the RSV which has "upon it"]. See below for explanation.

vs. 21: שָׁלוֹם: Here this word refers to more than Jacob's safety (Speiser). It refers to his total welfare. In view of the fact that this is a late addition its reference is to the prosperity which will come to him in the east. The translation is thus "health and well-being."

Gen. 17:1-14

vs. 2: נתן = grant (cf. Speiser, p. 124)

vs. 7: וַהֲקִמֹתִי = "I will uphold" on the basis of the meaning of the word as "fulfill" or "accomplish" when used with reference to covenants (cf. Num. 30:15; I Sam. 15:13).
vs. 11: וְהָיָה ...לְ is an indication of the function of the sign and should be translated as "it will serve as. . . ."

Gen. 35:9-15
vs. 12: נָתַתִּי is replaced in the Syriac by the more appropriate נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי, but there is insufficient support for this in other manuscripts.
vs. 13: "The place in which he had spoken to him" fits very awkwardly into this sentence, but it can best be understood not as a dittographical error (also Skinner, p. 425; similiarly, Gunkel, p. 387) but as an added clarification of the reference of מֵעָלָיו. See below for further explanation.

a. The occasion

The phrase called the transition just above is also the introduction which sets the stage for what is to transpire in the passage. That it can in fact belong to what follows as well as to what goes before may be seen in A-2, where the parallel introductory phrase, "When Abram was ninety-nine years ~~old~~. . ." which sets the stage for the following announcement that he will have a son, is not a transition from the specific situation just preceding it.

Though there are no parallel introductory formulae, all of these narratives are pictured as taking place in the same type of locale, and the principal character is in each case in the same type of life situation. Because no story is ever told which does not presuppose a larger setting or occasion, the larger context of these legends must be considered here even though the details may be of later origin. If the basic characteristics of the form have been retained in the later version, as form criticism presupposes, then the narrative tension of the story would also be essentially the same. Since the narrative tension is directly related to the context presupposed by the story, this would thus mean that the story originally would have had to presuppose a larger context, or occasion which, though vastly different with regard to details, would have been generally analogous to its present context. To ignore the problems of this context would thus make it impossible to interpret the narrative tension correctly. This is also important for determining the genre within the Israelite traditions where some of the present context may have been presupposed in the oral stage. In A-1 the principal character is a nomad coming from Haran into a land occupied by the Canaanites; in I he is a nomad who has been driven away from a succession of watering places; in J-1 he is a man who has been forced by circumstances to leave his family; and in J-2 he has returned to the site of J-1 after the long sojourn away from his homeland.[8] This basic situation in A-2 is not as different as it seems at first glance. In using Abraham's age as the basic starting point of the story, the writer was locating him according to the "chronological" rather than the "geographical" course of his life. This is an important factor with regard to the drama of the delayed birth of Abraham's child, and so it is made clear by the narrator at the outset.

At this point J-1 distinguishes itself from the others by having a more lengthy description of the occasion. It is reported that in J-1, Jacob, while fleeing from his brother, literally struck upon a place (פגע ב, meaning to meet, encounter, light upon or fall upon). In light of the prominent role stones are to play in this story, it is possible that the narrator meant to suggest that Jacob tripped or stumbled on one of the stones in the twilight, probably fell, and decided to stay for the night.[9]

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[8] Note that in J-2 the introductory phrase has been placed after the appearance formulae rather than before it in its normal position. This is an adjustment necessitated by the present context where Jacob is already in Bethel and therefore cannot be pictured as just arriving. This is an indication that this element of the form always had to be present even when the context made it awkward.

[9] For an illustration of the religious significance of stumbling upon a stone, see below.

The element of surprise that Westermann finds as a basic motif in this narrative is already present in this verb.[10] It is also implied that Jacob is not in just any place, but a special site (מָקוֹם).[11] In spite of the fact that no name is given at the outset, and the element of surprise and discovery that runs throughout this narrative, the phrases at the first give the reader a clue that this is no ordinary place that Jacob has happened upon. But the name cannot be given at the outset since it would prematurely reveal the climactic event related in the narrative.[12]

The importance of the "place" in A-1 is made clear in the introduction by mentioning the name of the place, Shechem (מְקוֹם שְׁכֶם vs. 6), and indicating that a sacred tree stood there (אֵלוֹן מוֹרֶה). The word מָקוֹם found in both of these passages is regularly used to designate holy sites.[13] In I, the location (Beersheba) is given in the introduction, and the conclusion tells that Isaac dug a well there. The well makes it a special place as the tree, and the stone made the places of A-1 and J-1 special. The place is not mentioned in the introduction to J-2 for the same reason that it was not in J-1. In its place is the general statement, "when he had come from Paddan-aram." But the importance of it is made clear by the conclusion as it was in J-1. Since the setting of A-2 is in the chronological rather than the historical course of Abraham's life, the place did not have to be mentioned. This further reflects the loose relationship of this narrative with the more concrete patriarchal tradition in the other sources.

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[10] FAT, p. 83.

[11] The phrases used are "the place" (הַמָּקוֹם), or "that place" (בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא), and later on after the dream Jacob speaks of "this place" (בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה) and "that place" (הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא) emphasizing the special character of the place where he had encountered deity.

[12] A similar situation is found in Gen. 22. (See below.)

[13] See especially Gunter Ostborn, Tōrā in the Old Testament (Lund: Ohlssons, 1945), p. 25; also Gunkel, p. 166.

There are thus two common elements in the introductions to A-1, J-1, and J-2: (a) the principal character is in movement because, according to the larger context, he is travelling; (b) he arrives at a special place, a holy tree, well, or stone. A-2 is singular in that it is not related to the motif of the patriarchal wanderings at all.

b. The appearance

A-1	וַיֵּרָא יהוה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
I	וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יהוה בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר
J-1	וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה ...
J-2	וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־יַעֲקֹב עוֹד... וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
A-2	וַיֵּרָא יהוה אֶל אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

It is obvious that in A-1, I, J-2, and A-2 a standard means of reporting a divine appearance is being used. The following formula is composed of basic elements common to all: And Yahweh (Elohim) appeared to X (name or third person pronoun), and said (to him). The individual variations of this form are the addition of a time reference in I (in that night); in J-2 the appearance formula and the geographical reference have been joined together with the appearance formula coming first. This change was required by the context.

The first important thing to note about this formula is that it is not used in relation to any of the other divine-human encounters in Genesis except in ch. 18 where it serves as a superscription for a long narrative which includes not only a promise but also the announcement of judgment on Sodom,[14] and ch. 26:2 where it serves as a superscription for a very late passage which was composed at the time of the final unification of the traditions (see below).[15] The conclusion, then, is that the formula belongs to the Type I vision account. This means that the original place of the appearance formula is in connection with a word of promise given at a holy place.

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[14] Rendtorff notes the fact that the appearance of Yahweh has been separated here from the cult aetiology which is its original place. He attributes this to the tendency to connect the appearance with a promise

The later history of this concept is found in the series of appearances of the glory of Yahweh connected with the Sinai revelation (Ex. 24: 15ff.) and the tent of meeting (Num. 14:10). In a study of this later history Rendtorff has found that the appearance of the glory of Yahweh in this wilderness tradition signifies the manifestation of his power in history; in the more specifically sacred realm, it is connected with the founding of the cult.[16] This later history of the appearance of the glory is certainly related to the earlier type of Genesis appearance, but it represents a second stage in the tradition which goes beyond the purview of this study. It is enough to realize that this is a motif that is not unique to Genesis.

In J-1 the communication between Jacob and Yahweh occurs in a dream rather than an appearance. This does not mean that it is inappropriate to compare the two, however, since they could both have the same function in the tradition.[17] It is furthermore clear that the tradition itself

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(*Offenbarung*, p. 24). He is correct in seeing that this formula did not originally belong to this type of narrative but has been secondarily attached to it. Its original place is as a prefix to the narratives modeled after the oath ceremony (i.e., Type I).

[15] The other passages where Elohim or Yahweh appears as the subject of נראה are in 22:14 where it has the meaning of "to provide," 35:1 where it refers back to J-1, and 48:3 where it refers back to J-2.

[16] Rendtorff, pp. 28ff.

[17] E. L. Ehrlich says that a dream "ist weniges ein psychologisches Phänomenon als vor allem ein traditions-und religion-geschichtliches." "Der Traum im Alten Testament," *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. 73 (1953), p. v. For a more psychologically

equated dreams with appearances (cf. Gen. 35:1). The distinction between A-1, I, J-2, and J-1 here is caused by the appropriation by the tradition of an old legend associated with Bethel.[18] The relationship between the dream element and the promise element which seems to come from a different tradition entirely, is a problem that has exercised scholars for many years.

> The discrepancy between the auditory and visual aspects of this account has been indicated in *Les Songes* (p. 108). This discrepancy along with the alternation of the names Elohim and Yahweh has long suggested to scholars that this narrative might be a combination of parallel J and E accounts. Wellhausen attributes vss. 13-16 (i.e., the promises) to J, and the remainder to E. According to vs. 12, in his view, the angels should communicate the message and not Yahweh as in vs. 13. The prepositional phrase in vs. 13, עליו, refers to Jacob since if it referred to the ladder it would have been ראשו instead, and Yahweh would have had to call very loudly. Otherwise he judges "your descendants" in vs. 13 to be an addition, and due to the fact that vs. 19 and vs. 22 seem to form a doublet, he attributes vs. 19 to another source. He also believes 19a to be a J gloss and 19b, a Jehovist gloss; finally the name Yahweh was inserted later in vs. 21 /*Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (4th ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1963), p. 30/. The other scholars have followed Wellhausen's thinking, if not always his source evaluation. Gunkel believes that Yahweh is alone in the J narrative and not surrounded by angels on the stairway as in E. He assigns to E: 11, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21a, 22, and to J: 13, 15, 16, 19. Skinner has noted that עליו in vs. 13 refers to ladder in the LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac but argues that if it had actually referred to the ladder it would have been [illegible]. Such a wide divergence of opinion over how it should have been written to refer to ladder as exists between Wellhausen and Skinner indicates that this line of argument is invalid. Skinner attributes 10-12, 17-22 to E with exception of 21b which is a gloss (pp. 377, 378). Smend attributes vss. 13-16 and 19 to J^2 and says it pictures Yahweh as standing beside the sleeping Jacob to impart his promises. To E he assigns vss. 10-12, 17, 18, 20-22. The little connecting prepositional phrase עלין he says refers to Yahweh standing by Jacob on the earth and not on the ladder. Verse 21b, he thinks,

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oriented study see, Andreas Resch, *Der Traum im Heilsplan Gottes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), "Die übrigen Traumberichte des A.T., lassen sich jedoch zum grossteil bis im letzte Einzelheiten historisch und psychologisch erklären." (p. 137); see also *Les Songes et leur Interpretation* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1959), esp. pp. 106-109.

[18] See Victor Maag, "Zum Hieros Logos von Beth-el," *Asiatischen Studien* (1951), pp. 122-133.

was not a gloss but says that E originally had האל in place of Yahweh. /Rudolph Smend, Die Erzählung des Hexateuch (Berlin: Georg Riemer, 1912), p. 70/. The finest source division has been carried out by Procksch who attributes to J vss. 10, 11a(b) because he believes that the J writer likes to give the time of day(!), 13-16, 21 and 19, and to E vss. 11a(a), b, 12, 17f., 20, 22. More recently Jean Delorme has taken over this same general source division in its major lines: E vss. 10-12, 17-18, 20-22 and J vss. 13-16, 19, "A Propos du Songe de Jacob," A La Rencontre de Dieu, Memorial Albert Gelin (Le Puy: Edition Xavier Mappus, 1961), pp. 47ff. Volz and Rudolph hold for the unity of this passage. In their view עליו refers to the ladder, and they reject the attempts to make it refer to Jacob as being too forced. They argue that the dream and the promise belong together on psychological grounds as well as on the grounds of the requirements of narrative style. One completes the other, and thus they belong together. Irrweg, pp. 73ff.

In light of this investigation it seems that the key phrase for understanding the relationship between the dream element and the promise element in this passage is "And Behold, Yahweh stood עליו." To understand the reference of עליו it is necessary to examine other passages where it is used with verbs meaning to stand. The phrases נִצָּב עָלָיו and עָמַד עַל... belong to a very definite situation when they have Yahweh or a king as their subject. In I Kings 23:3 and 11:14 the king stands by the pillar (הָעַמּוּד) in a covenant making ceremony in the temple. The close connection between covenant making and the giving of an oath has already been established above. The kings position by the holy pillar during the covenant ceremony was undoubtedly to enable him to place his hand on it while giving an oath during the ceremony. This is regular procedure for giving an oath. Yahweh is also pictured as standing by a holy object to swear, in his role as a judge. But then the function of swearing is somewhat different from the ordinary. A judge expresses a judicial verdict in the form of an oath, particularly when he condemns a person to be punished.[19] Such an oath was best given beside a holy object or at a holy place. It is in this role of judge that Yahweh is often pictured as standing (Is. 3:13, Hab. 3:6). Sometimes he is standing by his altar (נִצָּב עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ) to issue his sentence in the form of an oath.

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[19] Cf. I Kg. 2:23ff., and Horst, GR, p. 293.

The difference between the ladder in Jacob's dream and an altar is not as great as it appears at first glance. Speiser has shown that this ladder was actually a solid ramp or stairway resembling a Mesopotamian ziggurat.[20] Since such ziggurats were actually temples and places where sacrifices were offered it represents an elaborate form of an altar. When Yahweh takes his stand by this stairway he is thus standing by a holy object where it is appropriate to give oaths. It is thus likely that the phrase נִצָּב עָלָיו used here comes out of the rites connected with the oath ceremony. Now, however, it is a promissory oath rather than a judicial sentence which follows.[21] It is therefore incorrect to separate the appearance of God in the dream from his appearance to give his word of promise.[22] Since in all of the passages being examined a promissory oath follows an appearance formula, the dream must have the same function in this passage as the appearance formula in the others, i.e., to indicate the presence of Yahweh in a manner appropriate to the giving of an oath. The only distinction between them is that an old legend which probably told of the founding of the cult center at Bethel has been appropriated by the traditionists and utilized to present the appearance of God in a dramatic form. This will become clearer when the tradition history of the passage is discussed.

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[20] Genesis, p. 218.

[21] Note that the same construction is found in 18:3. See below for a discussion of this.

[22] The argument offered by Wellhausen that both the angels and Yahweh would not have been present in the same passage to deliver one message seems to be refuted by Is. 6.

c. The promise

There are two basic parts of the promise: the self-identification of the one giving the promise, and the promise itself. The self-identification (SI) does not always accompany the promise, but as a rule it is present and should be considered a basic part. First the form and meaning of the SI will be examined.

(1) The self-identification

a. *Origin of the Form*: The SI can best be understood as a variation of the oath formula used to invoke the gods as witnesses to an oath ceremony. Such an invocation was a standard part of almost every oath ceremony.[23] To make this clear the specific construction of these oath formulae must be determined. Because the oath was used in a great many situations and throughout a long period of time, the oath formula appears in a number of different constructions. The formulae which are of particular interest to this study fall into three categories: the nominal, the relative, and the genitive. Since this oath formula is basically the way man summons the gods, it is, in its simplest form, the way in which man utters the names of the gods to whom he is calling. These categories then correspond to three ways the names of the gods may be formulated—the name alone, the name with one or more attributes joined to it by a relative clause, or the name associated with another person, place, or thing which defines it more closely.

One of the most striking examples of the nominal type is in the oath sworn by the Reubenites, the Gaddites and half-Manasseh when they are accused of building an illicit altar for sacrifices in rebellion against Yahweh. They say, "El, Elohim, Yahweh, El, Elohim, Yahweh, he knows, and Israel itself will know, if it was in rebellion. . ." (Josh. 22:21). Here three names of deity are called, not to witness so much as to bear witness to the truth of the statement to follow. Even though this may occur in a very late insertion into the Hexateuch as Noth thinks, the formula itself is probably very old.[24] It is unlikely that the writers would have composed such an unusual oath formula which joins Yahweh with El and Elohim. Its authenticity is also supported by the repetition of the divine names which is very common in oath formulae.[25] In this type of oath formula the utterance contains only the divine names and derives its power from naming more than one.[26]

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[23] Cf. Pedersen, "Schwurformeln," *Eid*; Horst, *GR*, pp. 305f.

In Gen. 31:49 the name of Yahweh alone is used in another type of oath formula, "Yahweh watch between you and between me when we are absent one from another." Here Yahweh alone is summoned as a witness to the oath and as a judge who will watch to see that any offense will be punished.

The second type of oath formula is composed of the name of the divinity with a relative clause that usually refers to some manifestation of his power. This form of oath is very popular in the Old Testament. It usually occurs as an expansion of the shorter formula חַי יְהוָה. In II Sam. 49:9 David swears, "As Yahweh lives who has redeemed my life out of every adversity. . ."; in I Kings 2:23 Solomon swears, ". . . as Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. . . ." In this oath formula the name is the focal point, and this is expanded through reference to some particular action of God in the life of the one swearing or in the history of the nation.[27] This relative clause clearly serves to remind the participants of the power inherent in the name of Yahweh.

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[24] US, p. 190. [25] RGG, p. 347.

[26] It is interesting that in Israel where swearing by another God was forbidden, it was apparently possible to use this same type of oath formula by naming two other divine names that apparently did not stand in conflict with the name of Yahweh.

[27] Pedersen says that the formula חַי יְהוָה means "in Analogie mit

The third type of formula expands the name of the divinity through a genitive construction. The principal type of oath formula in this group is the oath by the fathers. This is related to the oath by the family or tribe. Pedersen finds traces of this type of oath in Gen. 24:3ff. where Abraham makes his servant place his hand under his thigh, probably on his genitals, and swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and earth. By touching the seat of the reproductive power of the family he is thus able to swear by the power distinctive to the family.[28] The account extends all the way to the fulfillment of this oath by the servant and tells of his response at the end. Though this story is usually considered to be relatively late because of its lengthiness and the unification of Abraham and Isaac which it presupposes, it nevertheless accurately reflects early customs connected with the giving and fulfillment of oaths. When the servant has fulfilled his commission and kept his oath, he first gives thanks to the God by whom he has sworn (vs. 48): "Then I bowed my head and worshipped Yahweh, and blessed Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son." This formulation of thanksgiving has some important similarities with, and differences from, the oath formula. In the oath itself given by Abraham at the beginning, the genitive construction is the "God of heaven and earth." The genitive construction in the praise and thanksgiving uttered by the servants [illegible] God of my master Abraham" (אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם). Here is at

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der Formel 'bei meinem Leben', diese: Ich bin von dir gelöst, wenn, usw . . . .'" Eid, p. 141; more recently Greenberg maintains that חַי is a noun in the construct meaning "life of. . .X." "The Hebrew Oath Particle Hay/[illegible]" JBL, 86 (1957), pp. 34-39.

[28] Pedersen, Eid, "Die Genitalien des Mannes vertreten das Geschlecht, zunächst die Kinder, aber danach das Geschlecht im ganzen, wie es aus den Formeln, die denselben Ritus bei den beutigen Arabern begleiten, erhellt," p. 150.

least one instance in which a phrase equivalent to the "God of my father" does not refer to a specific God. The patriarch named his God directly, while those who were under his authority only spoke more indirectly of the 'God of my master (or my father).'

This indirect divine designation could then be taken up and used in an oath formula by the descendants of the person as is evidenced by Gen. 31:53 when Laban says, "The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father judge between us." On the basis of this evidence (which is the only evidence in Genesis outside of the cultic legends) it would appear then that the name "God of (my) father X" may have originally been a divine designation characteristically used in oath formulae by a tribal leader's descendants. This would be supported by the fact that the oath by the power of the tribe (symbolized by the father) was exceedingly common among Semitic nomads. It would also provide a better explanation for the meaning of the problematical name פחד, used by Jacob in response to Laban's oath, which Alt believes to be the name of the deity worshipped by Isaac.[29] Rather than being a name of a deity whose cult was founded by Isaac, it would be a reference to the great, numinous power which manifested itself through Isaac in the eyes of his offspring. It was thus a more vivid reference to the tribal power embodied in the patriarch which could undergird and insure the oath.

In addition to that, however, this passage in Gen. 24 shows how natural it was after the fulfilling of an oath for the name of the deity to be supplemented with a relative clause telling how he had assisted in its fulfillment (אֲשֶׁר הִנְחַנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ אֱמֶת); i.e., the most recent manifestation of the deity was joined to the name. The addition of this relative clause would thus add power to the name of this god. When the name was called again in an oath formula, this relative clause could be retained as a permanent part of the name so as to depict more graphically the power of this deity. The result of this process would be the second type of oath formula mentioned just above, as well as the type of formulation represented by the total oath formula in 24:7: "Yahweh, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your descendants I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there." If there is such a process leading from the oath—to the divine action—to praise—to a new oath formula, then no sharp distinction can be made between this simple form of praise and the oath formula. They simply constitute different moments in the same on-going process. The form remains the same throughout; only its use changes.

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[29] KS, p. 26.

Another type of divine name which belongs to this group is the god of a holy place. Pedersen says, "The oaths by a god and by his temple are no different; for the nature and the holiness of the temple is of exactly the same type as the nature of the godhead. . . ."[30] Alt has also noticed that divine names that were originally associated with tribes tend to become attached to cities when these tribes settle.[31] One or both of these reasons could have given rise to the name "God of Bethel" (Gen. 31:13).

In summary one can thus say that there are three basic ways of formulating the name of God for the purpose of summoning him. The simplest and also probably the most powerful is the utterance of the name alone. To add strength, however, more than one name can be mentioned. In the second type the name is supported with a relative clause that refers to some expression of the might of this god. In the third type the divine name is supported by associating it in a genitive construction with some ancestor, hero, (place), etc.; this type of name can also be supplemented with a relative clause telling of some concrete manifestation of this God.

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[30] _Eid_, p. 147.

[31] _KS_, p. 40.

Excursus: Terminology

Because it is possible for a god to swear as well as a man, the section of the oath ceremony when the gods were called changed its form and took on a new meaning. Since the function of divinity in the oath ceremony was to witness the proceedings and later prosecute or prosper the persons depending on their faithfulness to their words, when the god swears he must name himself as the witness to his own oath. This transformation of the calling or naming of the gods into a self-calling or self-naming is the origin of the formula being called here the self-identification. The correspondence in form between the SI formulae in Genesis and the types of oath formulae mentioned above will be shown below, but before proceeding to that, a word must be said about the relation of the SI to the various other terms that have been used in recent investigations to refer to one or another of the types being included in this one term.

Zimmerli has made a study of what is essentially Type I, i.e., the nominal type.[32] He finds this formula primarily in priestly literature in the Pentateuch and in the prophetic writings which have been strongly influenced by the priestly tradition (II Isaiah and Ezekiel). The basic, original formula was the very short, "I am Yahweh,"[33] but this could be expanded with a relative clause to be, "I am Yahweh who. . ."[34] (Type II).

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[32] GO, pp. 11-40.

[33] Ibid., p. 14.

[34] Ibid.

These formulae can also be found in narrative literature in Genesis and Exodus such as 17:1, 26:24, 15:7.[35] He terms this essentially brief formula a "self-presentation formula" (Selbstvorstellungsformel).[36]

Westermann in his study of Deutero-Isaiah, thinks that Type II, which he calls a self-predication (Selbstprädikation Gottes) should be clearly separated from Type I, the self-presentation.[37] Whereas the self-presentation is rooted in the cultic oracle, the self-predication is related to the hymnic form and belongs to the genre of the self-praise of the gods which is common to the ancient Near East.[38]

When the roots of these formulae having God as their subject are recognized to be in the regular oath formulae, this duplication of terms and absolute separation of genres is not necessary. Zimmerli has already seen the relation of the self-presentation to the giving of an oath.[39] It has already been shown above that the regular oath formula can be expanded into a lengthy description of the might of the god through relative clauses. It was also shown that the oath formulae and the brief utterance of praise to God are simply different moments in the same process, which moved from the giving of the oath to its fulfillment, and therefore are fundamentally relayed to one another. If the self-presentation and -predication in divine speech are parallel to oath formulae in human speech then there would be no reason to make an absolute separation between them. The self-presentation of God in the divine oath would be related to the self-praise of the gods (i.e., self-predication in Westermann's terms) in the hymn, as the original oath formula is related to the praise of God by one, who through God's help has fulfilled his own oath. When the god fulfills his own oath he may praise himself. Then, however, there is no reason why such a hymnic self-predication cannot recur in a later oracle (or oath) as an expanded form of the self-presentation, as has happened in the regular oath formula (e.g., in 24:6ff.).

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[35] Ibid., p.25.

[36] Kuntz has taken over Zimmerli's terminology, translating "Selbstvorstellung" as "self-asseveration." (p. 62.)

[37] "Die Selbstprädikation der Gottheit (Kombination des Ich-Stils mit Partizipial- oder Relativstil) ist von der Selbstvorstellungsformel (Zimmerli), streng zu trennen." "Sprache und Struktur der Prophetie Deuterojesajas," FAT, p. 145.

[38] Ibid.

[39] GO, p. 21.

So if the forms of the self-presentation-predication are based upon the oath formulae, there is no reason to designate them as separate genres deserving separate names. In this study the term self-identification will be used rather than either of the other terms because they have been defined too narrowly and also because self-identification refers more accurately to the function of these formulae in the oath ceremony. The god is not presenting his name for the first time, nor is he simply describing himself. He is swearing by his own name, thereby making himself responsible for bringing to pass the thing he has promised, i.e., he identifies his name with certain coming events. Then after the events take place he praises himself as the 'god who did thus and so.' By associating the name with the events in this way, the name of the god is defined and empowered by those events.[40] The essence of this formula then is that the god identifies his name (i.e., his self) with either past or future events thereby causing these events to be understood as manifestations of his power.

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[40] It is also possible for a deity through his representatives to praise himself for deeds that he did not announce before hand, in which case there could arise what might appear to be a separate genre of self-praise. In Israel, however, the relation between the promise and praise of God was maintained as II Isaiah beautifully describes (esp. 41:25ff.).

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b. Form analysis: The SI in the Old Testament is composed of the three types of oath formulae described above preceded by the pronoun אני or אנכי. From the passages being considered in this study, Gen. 17:1, 35:9, and 15:1 fall into the first group—the nominal type of SI. This consists simply of the phrase "X" אני in Gen. 17:1, 35:9 and in 15:1.

Zimmerli's thorough analysis of this type in all of the priestly literature has produced some notable insights. This formula is used in connection with two distinctly different but related situations. The first is in the mouth of Yahweh himself and is related to Yahweh's action in history. There are two ways this action can be interpreted—as the means whereby one previously unknown comes to be fully known (e.g., Ex. 6:1ff.)—and as the fulfillment of an oath sworn by God (Ezek. 20). Corresponding to the SI in the former, is the declaration of knowledge "and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God" (Erkenntnisaussage, Ex. 6:7). Where the formula is qualified as an oath (Ezek. 20) the emphasis falls on the truth of God's word.[41] Because of the consideration mentioned above, however, the first usage in Ex. 6 can best be understood as also an oath formula in which Yahweh identifies his name with certain forth-coming deeds rather than simply introducing himself. Thus one could say that יהוה אני in both of these settings is an expression of the absolute power of God to fulfill his word or as Zimmerli describes it a "Geschehnis der Treue."

The second context in which it can be used is in the mouth of Yahweh's mediator (Ex. 6:6). This shows that it can be used to legitimate the word which the mediator must bring from Yahweh to the people. Though it is used here with reference to the "Evangelium" it can also be used in this same way to authoritate the law (Lev. 18:1).[42] In this way both the word of promise and the law are grounded upon the absolute power of God as it is expressed in his name.[43]

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[41] "Schwur ist Wort der Treue, die bereit ist, sich vor Zeugen zu binden. Das אני יהוה, die Selbstvorstellung Jahwes, ist damit als ein zu bestimmten Menschen hin geschehendes, sich an sie bindendes und um seines Eides willen ihnen treu bleibendes Offenbaren Jahwes." GO, p. 21.

This double usage to authoritate a promise of salvation as well as a command, is parallel to the two ways the "appearance" of Yahweh is used both to authoritate the promise and the cult, as Rendtorff has pointed out.[44] The function of the appearance and self-identification thus seems to be the same.

The other SI in this group, אֲנִי־אֵל שַׁדַּי, is used in Genesis in both of these senses. In Gen. 17 and 36 the SI is immediately followed by a command, and following this is a series of promises. This clearly shows that the authority upon which the commands of Yahweh were based is precisely the same as the authority which supported his word of promise. This authority was that of the power of God to fulfill his word as it is expressed in his name. This is why Zimmerli can say that the repetition of this formula in Leviticus means that each law is grounded in the heart of the Old Testament revelation of God.[45]

One final SI that falls into this category is in Gen. 15:1. Because it occurs within the structure of a completely different form, further discussion of it will have to be delayed until the whole form can be analyzed.

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[42] GO, pp. 23f.

[43] The distinction which Zimmerli makes between the "Ich" and the "power," and thus perhaps also between the truth and the power (by implication) of God, cannot be accepted by the writer. Here Rendtorff who sees the unity of these terms seems more correct (see Chapter I). This does not mean that the name of God is only a symbol for his power in history, however, as Rendtorff seems to argue. (See below.)

[44] OG, p. 24.

[45] GO, p. 4.

The second type of SI contains a relative clause or a participial clause in addition to the first person pronoun and the name of God. The only example of this type in the material being studied is in 15:7, "I am Yahweh who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." Here the relative clause has been expanded even further with an infinitive clause. The promise is contained in the infinitive clause rather than being an independent construction. By joining the promise to the SI with an infinitive clause the act of God mentioned in the relative clause is not merely used to support the authority of the name of God but is considered to be the specific basis of the promise. The basis of the future action of God toward Abraham is his past action. Since this is still a self-identification formula this means that the name of God is being supported and defined by not only his past but also his future action. This represents a later stage of the tradition when theological reflection over the relation of Yahweh's past and future action in history caused the SI formula and the promise to be fused. This short formula presupposes the Hexateuchal narrative in its full scope.

An extremely close parallel to this construction is found in Lev. 25:38, "I am Yahweh your God who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God." A similar construction which includes a participial clause is in Lev. 22:32f. "I am Yahweh who sanctify you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am Yahweh" (see also Lev. 19:36; 26:13; 20:8; 21:15; 22:9, 16). The two formulae quoted occur at the conclusion of the giving of the laws and are oath formulae used to authoritate the law. Since the Holiness Code from which these verses come was a product of the Yahwistic cultus,[46] it is likely that this type of formulation has its setting in the later cultus and has only secondarily been inserted into the patriarchal legends in 15:7. The relative type of SI has a very prominent later history, especially in Deutero-Isaiah where it is used frequently (esp. 44:24-28) in a hymnic style as an important element in the prophetic proclamation.[47]

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[46] Cf. Henning Graf Reventlow, Das Heiligkeitsgesetz (Neukirchener Verlag, 1961).

The third type, the genitive construction, is only found in the form of a SI in the book of Genesis (26:24; 28:13; 46:3) and in the passage which reflects the transition between the patriarchal and national periods (Ex. 3:6). It is the designation for divinity; therefore, [illegible] is associated the most closely with the patriarchal period and is the one considered the most characteristic of it. The relationship between this SI and the third type of oath formula described above is obvious. The SI is based on this oath formula and in each case is used before a promissory oath given by a god.

c. Religio-historical interpretation: Now that the form of the SI has been clarified it is necessary to turn to a consideration of the meaning which this type of utterance had in the patriarchal cultus. Since the name of the deity is expressed here, this is a central problem. Do these SI formulae contain the names of the deities who were honored by the patriarchs? Do the names provide a clue as to the nature of the patriarchal cultus, as Alt contends? To answer these questions it will be necessary to look briefly at the general features of Semitic tribal religion and then move on to a consideration of the nature of divine names in the ancient Near East.

Alt has given a great deal of attention to determining the meaning of this genitive type construction as a designation of divinity in the tribal cultus. He interprets the meaning of the phrase "the god of X" to mean, "the god who was first worshipped by X." Because the man's name continued to be connected with the god he is considered to be the founder of the cult.[48] But then how does a man found a cult? The only way this can happen is for a previously unknown numen to reveal himself.[49] Because no other person experiences this numen in the same way, the name of the one to whom the revelation first came remains attached to it. Alt believes this connection between the numen and the individual is a basic characteristic of this type of deity. It is decisive for its nature that it be bound to persons rather than places and circumstances surrounding the revelation. He poses this type of god over against the nature gods that were bound to places.[50]

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[47] See especially Joachim Begrich, Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964), p. 51; Zimmerli, GO, p. 30, note 40; Westermann, FAT, pp. 145ff.

It is certainly quite possible that there were special revelations of divinity to individuals in the ancient world that gave rise to divine names and cults. Whether "god of X" was a cultic name for a deity in the sense that Alt describes it, however, is very questionable. The father of the nomadic tribe could receive a special revelation of divinity, but tribal religion did not rest on such an uncertain basis. As Robertson Smith has explained so well, tribal religion among the Semites was tied in very closely with their social structure. As the supreme authority in the tribe, the father was both a social and a religious figure as the king was in the nation.[51] The image of the father exercising the various powers which he had as the head of the tribe greatly influenced the conception of god in the minds of the members. No special revelation of divinity was required for the founding of a tribal cult since the numinous power possessed by the father was, itself, a sufficient basis for their religion.[52]

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[48] KS, p. 41.

[49] ". . . es muss die Offenbarung eines bis dahin unbekannten Numens gewesen sein, die der Betreffende erlebte und die ihn zur Verehrung zwang." Ibid., p. 42.

[50] Ibid., pp. 42f.

[51] Religion of the Semites, p. 27.

That the cult of the "God of the Fathers" was not founded on a special revelation of divinity but was instead based on the social structure of the tribe is also strongly implied by the origin and nature of divine names in Sumeria as this has been described by Thorkild Jacobsen.[53] He begins by defining more clearly exactly what is meant by the often very vague term 'numen' or numinous power:

> The numinous appears to be immediately and unreflectingly apprehended as a power in, underlying, and willing the phenomenon, as a power within it for it to come into being, to unfold in this its particular and distinctive form. In consequence the phenomenon largely circumscribes the power, for the numinous will and direction appear as fulfilled in the phenomenon and do not significantly transgress it.[54]

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[52] In describing the power of the chief (also considered by most to be a patriarch) among south African tribes, I. Shapera writes, "But in all divisions the chief is specially 'doctored' at the time of his installation and on various occasions afterwards. This treatment, which corresponds to the private doctoring that almost every person in the tribe likewise undergoes, is intended not merely to protect him from personal harm, but also to give him the power of dominating his subjects. Among most Nguni, especially, the main feature of the great annual first-fruits ceremony is the ritual 'strengthening' of the chief; and here he is said to have such an overwhelming 'personality' or 'shadow' (isitunzi) that ordinary people do in fact fear to approach him too closely. Sotho do not stress his magical aura to nearly the same extent, but among them too the personal 'medicines' that he uses are held to make him 'awe' inspiring and irresistible; and I have heard it said of an irresponsible and much-criticized young chief in Bechuanaland that his failure to command popular respect was due partly to his relying upon 'doctors' who did not know the right magic for men of his position. . . .Normally, therefore, the chief's power is strengthened by the belief that he has 'strong medicines' in him and at his command." Government and Politics in Tribal Societies, pp. 107f. Also, van der Leeuw, pp. 281-282.

[53] Thorkild Jacobson, "Formative Tendencies in Sumerian Religion, The Bible and the Ancient Near East (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), pp. 267ff.

[54] Ibid., p. 268. Also, Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 145.

In the early stage of religious development the gods themselves did not transcend the characteristics of a given phenomenon but were the exact equivalents of them. Because this numinous will was bound to a phenomenon, its primary expressions—its name and image—were also identical with it, e.g., "Utu is the numinous power that comes into being as the sun, the sun-god, and the visible form which that power takes is the flaming sun disk; the language allows no distinction between the two."[55] The significant point here is that at the earliest stage, the name of the divinity and the natural phenomenon to which it was related were not separated. The god's name was the name of the phenomenon.

It is clear from this that the gods originated when man named the numinous power he encountered in an object. The phenomenon could not reveal its name. This had to be supplied by man.

The numinous power was encountered, of course, not only in the phenomena of the natural world but in a great many types of experiences. Where and how a man encountered the numinous power depended to a large extent on his own needs, or even fears. Jacobsen points out that every apprehension of the numinous by man meant the recognition of certain powers in the object or experience which man needed for his security or salvation.[56] If a man had an extraordinary piece of good luck, for example, he could recognize in this the action of a numinous power on his behalf. This is the way in Sumerian religion, Jacobsen says, that a man acquired a personal god, a dingir (the general term for any numinous power, but the concrete reference was to a personal god). There is even a term for this type of experience meaning "to acquire a god" (dingir tuku).[57] This figure was furthermore pictured as a benevolent father or mother interested in furthering the good fortune of the individual. "Inviting spontaneous allegiance as 'good,' the personal god was made the object of a permanent cult in the house of his or her protégée."[58]

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[55] Ibid., and many other examples of this are given.

[56] Ibid., p. 270.

[57] Ibid.

The same type of god has been observed by Curtis in Semitic religion. The personal god there is called a _weli_, meaning protector, patron, or even next of kin. The _weli_ need not manifest his power solely through unusual events, however, for this name can also refer to an ancestor.[59]

These considerations certainly lead into a religious milieu similar to that of the patriarchal era. There are several stories which tell of an encounter with a numen and end with the naming of his power.[60] Of particular interest here are Gen. 32 and Judg. 13 where the person involved asks for the name of the numinous power which in each case is a divinity in human form. In neither case does the divine power reveal his name, but both end with a naming event—in Judg. 13, the naming of the god—in Gen. 32, the naming of the place. The names in each case refer specifically to the experience as they do in all of the other stories. Gen. 32 is highly unusual in that the divine person is the first to ask the name of Jacob, and when it seems inappropriate to the experience, Jacob is given a new name based upon that experience. Throughout all of these accounts, then, the principle Jacobsen found concerning the correspondence of the names of the gods with concrete phenomena or experiences, is in evidence.

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[58] _Ibid_.

[59] Curtis Samuel Ives, _Ursemitische Religion im Volksleben des Heutigen Orients_ (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), p. 82.

[60] Gen. 16:7ff., 22, (21:15), 32:22ff., Judg. 6:11ff., 13:2ff. There is a tendency in these stories for the naming of the numina to become the naming of a place rather than a god. In Gen. 16 both are done. This is sufficient to make the principle clear.

One further very significant implication may be drawn from this. The naming of the god always has to occur after the definitive revelatory experience, i.e., after the moment when man has actually experienced the concrete beneficent event. Because the name of the god is precisely the same as that event, it is structurally impossible for the name to originate before the event (speaking, of course, of the primal situation). This principle is adhered to even where the numinous power is in human form and thus can be asked to give his name. Perhaps the question with which the divinity replies, "Why do you ask my name?" is to be taken at face value. It was not necessary for the god to state his name since it was equivalent to the experience. But still there was the nagging suspicion on the part of man that he had not actually understood this experience correctly and still did not know the true name of the deity.[61]

It is clear, however, that these stories represent a later stage of religious development than the Sumerian nature religion mentioned first. Jacobsen goes on to say that there was a marked tendency in Sumerian religion for the numinous power first encountered as 'will in specific phenomena' to be modified to conform to a human image. "This guided the human response to the numinous into channels parallel to those developed for relations of dependence in human society."[62] Since Sumerian society during this time was that of a well-organized city state, "the gods came to be part of society, the ruling caste exercising all basic economic and political functions of the country."[63] It is during this phase that the gods came to be kings and judges, etc. In contrast to the earlier phase, "the numinous has receded from the visible phenomenon, is no longer one with it as mind with body but appears as a power in charge of it, administering, owning it."[64] The numinous power is thus encountered precisely in the form of social authority, and the divine world becomes a reflection of the structure of the society.

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[61] Cf. the Egyptian tale of "The God and His Unknown Name of Power," ANET, p. 12.

[62] BANE, p. 274.

[63] Ibid.

The conclusions of Jacobsen concerning the development of Sumerian religion correspond amazingly to those of Eissfeldt concerning the development of Semitic religion. There also, the primary group of divine names refers to natural phenomena and the later group to important figures in the social structure.[65] It is safe, therefore, to conclude that the Semitic patriarchal religion shared some of the same presuppositions as the Sumerian religion Jacobsen describes, and, in fact, falls into the second stage of this religious development. The numinous power represented by the divine name, the "God of the Fathers," would be directly related to the many aspects of the authoritative power of the father over the social structure of the family or tribe. There could of course be special revelations of divinity to the father which would occasion the naming of a personal god, but these contingent experiences would not have been the basis of a cult of the father's god. Any such cult would have been based on the authoritative power of the father who ruled the tribe.

These considerations lead to several important conclusions about patriarchal religion. The SI cannot be interpreted as the primary revelation of the name of God because: (1) in the ancient Semitic religion the gods do not reveal their names; they were originally named by man on the basis of revelatory experiences; (2) the SI is connected, not with a concrete revelatory event, but with an oath, i.e., a verbal manifestation of power. Since the authority of the father as the clan leader rested not upon his words but upon his position in the family of the former clan leader[66] or in some cases upon outstanding deeds, the manifestation of the divine power which such a father possessed would not be in the form of words but rather in concrete events or symbols of office.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Eissfeldt, "Götternamen und Gottesvorstellungen bei den Semiten," Kl. Schrift., pp. 194-205.

The original cultic legends among the nomadic people were most likely similar to those found in Gen. 16 (21) and 32. The numinous power was revealed through some miraculous event(s) in the life of the patriarch (matriarch) or some mighty deed. Such legends would have served to support the authority of the tribal leader and to convince the members of the tribe that the leader was in contact with divine power. A promissory oath would have never been a sufficient basis for a tribal cult, and it can be said with certainty that when it appears to be so in the picture of patriarchal religion presented in Genesis, this is the result of later interpretation. This does not mean that such oaths could not have been given within the tribal cult and remembered through the years. As it will be shown below, the original place of these oaths was as a divine oracular response to a cultic lament. Two typical examples of such laments have been preserved in Gen. 15:1ff., and 7ff. It was the result of later interpretation that the oracle was lifted out of its original setting and presented as an oath upon which the whole of patriarchal religion was based. This was a change that reflected the faith of the amphictyony when the structure of society rested upon a covenant between men and between the society and its god.

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[66] Shapera notes that among African tribes a chief is generally chosen because of his position in the ruling family. There are exceptions when the 'next in line' is manifestly incompetent, but the one chosen in his place has to distinguish himself on the battlefield or in some other great action (p. 52). This is to say that within the tribe the primary form for the manifestation of divine power is through deeds rather than words. The appreciation of the power of words did not arise until the growth of genuine amphictyonies. Shapera does not report the existence of any of these among the south African tribes. Coalitions were formed through conquest and subjugation rather than through covenants.

(2) The promissory oath

The basic problem in analyzing the tradition history of the promise, according to Westermann, is that of determining its original form.[67] This problem first came to light in the work of Alt on the patriarchal religion. On the basis of Gen. 15, especially, Alt argues that the original form of the promise was the single promise of a son. This promise belonged to the pre-Palestinian era. The promise of land would have arisen later during the time when the tribes began their settlement.[68]

In his study, Westermann separates the various promises and outlines the ways they can be combined.[69] He concludes that the oldest level of the promise contained only one promise, that the oldest promise narratives contained the promise of a son (Gen. 18, 16), that there was also a very old narrative containing only the promise of land (Gen. 15:7ff. and perhaps Gen. 28), and that the promise of blessing is a secondary formation which presupposes the other promise form.[70] In the last stage of the tradition there is a tendency to combine many promises (P material) and to add elements on to the older promises.

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[67] *FAT*, p. 18.

[68] *KS*, p. 66. Other work in this area has been done by Noth, who fails to discuss the relation between the promise of land and children and considers them both to belong to an early stage of the patriarchal religion (*UP*, p. 58); then there is von Rad's study which deals primarily with the promise of land ["Verheissenes Land und Jahwes Land im Hexateuch," *Gesammelte Studien*, *TB*, Vol. 8 (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), pp. 87-100]. Elsewhere he argues for the priority of Gen. 15:7ff. containing the promise of land, over 15:1ff. which is one of the oldest legends containing the promise of descendants (Genesis, p. 185.).

[69] "Landverheissung allein, Mehrungsverheissung allein, Verheissung (der Geburt) eines Sohnes allein, Mehrungsverheissung mit Verheissung eines Sohnes, Mehrungsverheissung mit Segensverheissung, Mehrungs- und Landverheissung zugleich, Kombination vieler Verheissungsinhalte." *FAT*, p. 32.

Since it is impossible to make any statement about the form of the promises in the Type I narratives under consideration in this section without seeing them in their relation to the others, the task here is to make an analysis of the promises in Genesis using Westermann's work as a basis but attempting to determine more exactly the levels of tradition to which the various promises belong. This is necessary not only to discover the original form of the promise but also to see the tradition history of the passage in which it stands. The presuppositions of this analysis, derived from the work of Alt and Westermann, are:

1. The single promise related to a specific need is the most original form.
2. The tradition tended to join promises that were relevant to a later historical period to the earlier single promise making it impossible to say with certainty that any but the first promise originally belonged to the narrative.
3. The promise of a son, of land, and of blessing were originally separate elements that were only unified in a later stage of the tradition.

In tracing the history of the promise through its stages of development it will also be the intention of this study to determine as nearly as possible the origin of each of these separate promise motifs. The promises, when they are categorized on the basis of their form, fall into three general groups corresponding to the early history of Israel: (a) the pre-Israelite period in which the promises are found in the older type of cultic legends, (b) the period of the unification of the tribes into an amphictyony and then into a nation, in which the promises are found in the type of narrative based upon the oath ceremony, (c) the later period in which various independent narratives are inserted.

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[70] Ibid.

(a) The pre-Israelite period:

In the oldest stratum of the tradition the promise of a child and of land were separate, and each was unelaborated by other promises or blessings. The narratives which contain only the promise of a son are Gen. 18:10 and 15:1-6. The promise in 18:10, "I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son," is not a promise formula but is thoroughly integrated into the narrative and could not occur elsewhere. Westermann has shown that 18:1-15 is a "true promise narrative,"[71] and therefore the promise is the central element and cannot be separated. In Gen. 15:1ff. the promise is also tied in very closely to the context. Abraham complains to the deity that a slave born in his house will be his heir since he has no son. The response is, "This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir." The promise is formulated as an exact refutation of the complaint preceding it.[72] Here again the promise is both integrated into the context and indispensable to it.

In vs. 5 a sign is given to confirm the promise.[73] Abraham is asked to see if he can count the stars, and then goes on to say, ". . .so shall your descendants be." This is not to be regarded as a regular promise of increase as Westermann does.[74] Though the same figure is used in various promises of multiplicity (32:12; 22:16; 26:3; 16:10), in each case this occurs in the secondary stage of the tradition and does not serve as a sign. Because of the unique wording of this promise and its thorough integration into the narrative, it is unlikely that it was added secondarily. In addition the sign is an integral part of this form, as the analysis of Gen. 15 below will show. Of course, the effect of the sign is to give a promise of increase, but a sign itself is not to be simply equated with a promise. They have different functions in the narrative and must therefore be distinguished.

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[71] ". . .d.h. eine Erzählung, zu der von Angang an und notwendig die Verheissung hinzugehört." *FAT*, p. 19.

[72] Comp. *FAT*, p. 22 against Hoftijzer who attributes the promise to a late Deuteronomic redactor (*Verheissung*, p. 29). Hoftijzer does not examine the relation of the promise to the form of the narrative at all.

[73] On the relationship of the sign to the word of God, see Carl A. Keller, *Das Wort Oth als 'Offenbarungszeichen Gottes,'* Inaugural Dissertation, (Basel: E. Hoenen, 1946), esp. p. 16; and for the relationship of the sign and the regular oath, see p. 46.

[74] *FAT*, p. 23.

The original promise of land occurs in an almost identical form and wording in three passages.

12:7 לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
15:18 לְזַרְעֲךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
24:6 לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

In 24:6 it occurs in an oath formula uttered by Abraham as an attributive action of God alongside the leading out of his homeland; this passage belongs to a much later stage of the tradition than 15:7ff.[75] Below, it will be shown that also 12:7 belongs to one of the last stages of the composition of Genesis.[76] Gen. 15:18 is left as the primal source of the land promise. But the fact that the land promise here is identical to those found in such later traditions raises a question as to whether this promise could have originated in a genuine old patriarchal tradition. The chief argument for its antiquity is based upon the fact that it stands in the context of a covenant ceremony that is presumed to be a genuine old patriarchal tradition.[77] It is formulated here as an oath in a covenant ceremony and as such, is an integral part of this narrative.[78] One sign of its integration into this context is that it is formulated in the perfect, whereas, in 12:17 and 24:6 it is in the imperfect. This underscores the certainty of the promise in response to Abraham's question, "How am I to know that I shall possess it?" When one takes into consideration the fact established in Chapter I, that the understanding of man's relationship to God as based upon a covenant or oath, was a charateristic of the amphictyonic religion and not the religion of the tribe, then the presence of the promise of land in the context of a covenant ceremony becomes evidence of its lateness rather than of its antiquity. It is possible that this tradition could have originated in the southern amphictyony at Hebron at a time when the southern tribes were establishing a claim on the land, but scarcely any earlier. The sacrificial rite, which is itself a normal part of tribal religion, might go back into the tribal period as will be shown below.

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[75] Ch. 24 belongs to a stage of the tradition which presupposed the unification of the Abraham and Isaac traditions as well as the call of Abraham from his homeland. The understanding of Yahweh here also presupposes both 15:7 and 15:18 in their present form. Cf. Gunkel, p. 249.

[76] Ch. 12:7 is verbally dependent upon 15:18. There is no trace here of an older independent narrative. The reason it has been presented here as a simple oath at the beginning of the Abraham narrative is to ground Abraham's faith upon the promise. (See below.)

The conclusion is then that the two occurrences of the promise of a son are both uniquely worded and firmly set in the context of old narratives. The promise of land is found in only one old narrative (15:7ff.), and the wording there is almost identical to the wording in two late passages (12:7; 24:16). The likelihood is thus that it is of later origin than the promise of a son.

(b) The period of tribal unification:

During this period a new motif appears, the promise of blessing and increase, and this motif is used frequently as a means of unifying two originally separate bodies of patriarchal traditions. It occurs both alone and in combination with many other motifs which seem to develop out of it. In the final stages it is unified with the promise of land, but it is clear that these two motifs were originally quite independent. A more natural point of contact for this tradition with the older pre-Israelite material was found in promise of a son as 15:1-6 clearly illustrates. It is very probable, in fact, that the motif of the blessing and increase had already begun to become unified with the motif of the promise in the pre-Israelite period.

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[77] "Thus in our narrative about the making of the covenant we have an original segment from the oldest patriarchal tradition" (von Rad, Genesis, p. 184; also Gunkel, p. 181.

[78] "Der Schwur ist bei der Bundesschliessung notwendiger Bestandteil." Gunkel, p. 180.

(1) Abraham and Isaac

The original location of the promise of blessing and multiplicity in the Genesis narrative is in those passages which are concerned with unifying the Abraham and Isaac traditions. The three passages to be examined here, Gen. 22:17; 26:3; 26:24 are all associated with the figure of Isaac, however, and not Abraham. In all three of these passages there is a strong literal and stylistic interdependence, or one might say a traditio-historical relationship.

22:17	וְהַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ
26:4	וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ
26:24	וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ

The same verb (1st person of רבה and the same noun זרע, with a second person singular suffix), in precisely the same syntactical relationship occur in all three; in 22:17 and 26:4 the same illustrative figure is used (כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם).[79] In 26:24 the promise of blessing multiplicity is the first and only element in the divine speech. In 22:16 it is the first element and thus the most original, but it has been expanded by the promise, "And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." This is used again in Gen. 24:60 in connection with a blessing of increase given to Rebecca by her kinsman (another independent tradition) and probably refers to the hope that later generations will have influence and power over their enemies rather than literally possess their gate.[80] It would thus not be a modified promise of land.

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[79] In 26:24 there is no illustrative figure at all; in 22:16 the figure of the stars is expanded even more to include the sand on the seashore (וְכַחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שְׂפַת הַיָּם).

In 26:4b and 22:18 another blessing formula is found.

26:4b וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְזַרְעֲךָ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ

22:18 וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְזַרְעֲךָ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקֹלִי

Through the descendants of Isaac "all the nations (גּוֹיֵי) of the earth will be blessed" (or literally, bless themselves). This formulation differs markedly from a similar type of blessing in Gen. 12:3 and 28:13. Its association in both cases with the increase motif, which is Canaanite in origin (see below), is an indication that this formulation originally came out of a Palestinian tradition. The use of the term "family" rather than "nation" in 12:3 and 28:13 may be an indication of an origin for this expression in the early period after the tribes wandered into the land, and before the rise of "national" consciousness reflected in 26:4b and 22:18 by the use of the term גּוֹי. And then it also might be explained on the basis of the differing sources of these passages (12:3 and 28:13 - J; and 22:18 - E).

All three accounts share a very similar conclusion.

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[80] For an explanation of the significance of the gate as the site of court, see Ludwig Köhler, Hebrew Man (New York: Abingdon, 1956), p. 130. To possess the gate of a city would mean to have control over not only the place of access to the city, but also the place where judicial decisions were made. Thus this phrase probably means to have influence over the enemy at his most vital point.

22:18 עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקֹלִי
26:5 עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי...
26:24 בַּעֲבוּר אַבְרָהָם עַבְדִּי

This makes it clear that the blessing given to Isaac is due to the fact that Abraham has obeyed the voice of God. The immediate reference of this statement is to the event recorded in Gen. 22:1-14, as 22:16 makes clear. Although the wording in 26:24 varies from that of 22:19 and 26:5 in keeping with the brevity of the whole scene, its reference is certainly the same. Since there is also a correspondence in wording between these three passages, and this final statement makes it clear that the blessing to Isaac is based upon Abraham's obedience as it is described in ch. 22, it is safe to conclude that 26:3ff., 26:24, and 22:15 all presupposed a knowledge of ch. 22 in its present form. Since both J (26:24) and E (22:15) (or RE) traditions are represented here, it must be assumed, if the source theory is correct, that ch. 22 in the oral period was also known by the J writer even though he did not include it in his narrative. The only other possibility would be to assume that all of these passages were added by the same hand. This dependency on ch. 22 (whether oral or written) makes clear the importance of this chapter in the unification of the figures of Isaac and Abraham.

At this point a major variation of 26:3ff. must be mentioned. In both vs. 3 and vs. 4 a promise of land is given in wording that is similar to 15:18 but different enough to indicate that it stands in a different stratum of tradition.

vs. 3 כִּי־לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲרָעֹת הָאֵל
vs. 4 וְנָתַתִּי לְזַרְעֲךָ אֵת כָּל־הָאֲרָצֹת הָאֵל

Though the first and only promise in 22:16f. and 26:24 was that of increase, here the first promise is that of land. This promise is explicitly identified as the promise given originally to Abraham ("and I will fulfill— וַהֲקִמֹתִי —the oath— הַשְּׁבֻעָה —which I swore to Abraham your father.") The second promise of land in vs. 4 is worded the same but is now placed after the promise of increase. Why was the promise of land repeated? The irregular complex structure of this passage has long been a problem for critics.[81] It can best be understood as a late addition which belongs to the same stage of the tradition as 22:16ff. whose purpose is to connect the genuine Isaac legends in 26:6ff. to the larger context. The problem of the redactor would then be to bring the distinctive traditions of Isaac into a harmonious connection with the larger patterns of the patriarchal narrative. So Isaac is portrayed as receiving a vision at the outset of his wandering, just as had Abraham, but then the name of the place is not mentioned. He is then commanded *not* to do what Abraham did, i.e., to go down into Egypt. At this point, however, a conflict arises between the distinctive emphasis of the Abraham traditions and those of Isaac. Abraham first received the promise of land and then (15:1ff.) the promise of descendants. This sequence was also carried over into the inaugural vision of Jacob in 28:10ff. where the sequence is—land—descendants—blessing. In the Isaac traditions the promise of increase was the most fundamental as evidenced in 22:16ff. and 26:24. The compromise achieved was to place the promise of land first, and then give a sequential arrangement more appropriate to the Isaac traditions, i.e., the promise of increase followed by the promise of land and blessing. So in 26:3ff. there is evidence of a conflict between the larger patterns of arranging the promise and the peculiarities of the Isaac traditions. The many lines of dependency reaching to other passages indicate the artificiality of this passage. It is for this reason that it has not been treated as a separate cultic legend.

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[81] The results of the source criticism of the passage are as follows: Dillman attributes the first three words in vs. 1, from "and he said" in vs. 2 and vs. 6 to E, vs. 1b, the first three words of vs. 2, and 3a to J, and vs. 3b-5 to a Deuteronomic redactor (*Genesis*, pp. 201ff.); Wellhausen attributes vss. 1-5 as a whole to a redactor later than J (*Hexateuch*, p. 23); Procksch assigns 1a (b)(a), 1b, 2a (a), b, 3a to J and 1a (b)(c), 2a(b), 3b-5 to a redactor (pp. 156f.); Skinner gives 1a(b)(a), 2a(a)b to J and 1a (b)(c), 2a(b)b, 3b-5 to a redactor; Eissfeldt gives 1a (a), b, 2a, 3a(a) to L, 1a(b), 5a(b), b to a redactor, 2b, 3a(b) to J and 3b, 4, 5a(a) to E (*Hex.-Syn.*, pp. 45ff.); Volz and Rudolph attribute vss. 1-5 to a late redactor and choose not to divide it into two sources. Among the critics that do find two sources here, there is substantial agreement that 1-3a is combination of either J and E (Dillmann) or J and R (Procksch, Skinner, Noth, Eissfeldt), and 3b-5 is redactional addition, except for Eissfeldt who attributes this to E because of its close dependence upon 22:16ff. and similarity to ch. 15. The influence of R also in vss. 1-3a makes it evident that this passage is fundamentally a late unit which serves to connect the J narrative which follows with the larger context. The view of Wellhausen and Volz-Rudolph would then seem more in keeping the whole tenor of the unity. The repetition of the land promise, the major reason for dividing this unit into two sources, can be understood on traditio-historical grounds more adequately than on source critical.

Now it is necessary to turn to the consideration of a deeper traditio- and religio-historical problem that arises in these passages. Both promises in ch. 26 are placed under the promise of accompaniment ("I am with you, I will be with you") and blessing ("and I will bless you"). The first question which must be asked here is how the concept of blessing relates to the concept of the promise or promissory oath. Since the oath-covenant concept was so deeply implanted in Israel's religious mode of thought, the relationship of it to the essentially Canaanite concept of blessing must have been a fundamental problem from the very earliest amphictyonic days. The covenant oath was the basis of the relationship between man and God in Israel. This relationship demanded the exclusive loyalty of both parties. Yahweh could thus not tolerate the devotion of his people to any power outside of his control. When his word or oath becomes the basis of faith then a conflict immediately arises between this word and all other power-words such as blessings and curses.[82] This is especially true since the basic oath connected with early Yahwism seems to be the promise of land, whereas the blessing associated with Canaanite religion, offered fertility. The question which had to be answered, then, concerned the relationship between this god whose oaths formed the basis of Israel's hope to possess the land and the gods of the Canaanites whose blessings offered the hope of numerous descendants.[83] The question of the relation of the blessing of increase and the oath of Yahweh was answered in 22:16, where the blessing and fertility tradition now associated with the central figure of Isaac, was first joined to the whole structure; "By myself I have sworn, says Yahweh, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply. . . ." Here the blessing, especially because it is a blessing of fertility, has been transformed into an oath. In this way Yahweh's oath is made the basis of the blessing of fertility just as it is the basis of the claim on the land. In this way the oath/covenant mentality of Israel could incorporate an originally alien and potentially threatening concept. This blessing is to be still more explicitly implanted in Israelite tradition in the P material (esp. ch. 17) when it is associated with El Shaddai, whom Yahweh had superseded (Ex. 6), and based upon the covenant.

In 26:3 it was subordinated by placing the promise of the land ahead of it as the first promise in the series, and in 26:24 it was subordinated by identifying it with the God of the Fathers rather than with Yahweh.

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[82] The potential threat of the "blessing" to Yahweh's distinctive promissory oath becomes evident when the power of this blessing is appreciated. Horst describes it as "Der Segen, von einem wirklich Segensmächtigen gesprochen, wirkt in der Welt der Magi ex opere operato. Machterfülltes Wort kehrt eben nicht leer zurück, darum auch das segenerfüllte nicht. Es wirkt das, was es zum Inhalt hat." "Segen und Segenshandlungen in der Bibel," *Gottes Recht*, p. 192.

[83] "Segen ist fruchtbarkeit, naturhafte Fruchtbarkeit." *Ibid.*, p. 194.

It is most significant that here in the J source (26:24)[84] Yahweh has been omitted from the oath formula, while also in J material in 28:13, as well as in 15:7 Yahweh is named. This means that the SI formula containing the name of Yahweh is not directly connected through a SI formula with the promise of increase anywhere in Genesis, while at the same time, it is related in this manner to the promise of land. Though promises of increase are added to promises of land which are themselves preceded by an oath formula containing the name of Yahweh (as in 28:10ff.), nowhere is there a SI of Yahweh immediately preceding a promise of increase. This undoubtedly indicates a reluctance on the part of even the J tradition to directly associate Yahweh with the promise of fertility.

Now that it has been shown that the promise of increase is not likely to have originated in the distinctively Yahwistic stratum of the tradition, what can be said about its origin? Alt and those who follow him are probably correct in thinking that the promise of a son belongs to the earliest pre-Palestinian stage of the patriarchal traditions.[85] The concept of blessing is missing entirely from these early promise narratives, whereas in the later stages of the tradition, including the P material, it is increasingly in evidence. In all of this later material the content of the blessing is the fruitfulness and multiplicity of the family, i.e., basically sexual fertility. The possibility is very strong that this motif, if it did not originate entirely in the time after the tribes came into contact with Canaanite religion, was then at least vastly expanded and elevated in importance. Cross has clearly proven that the Canaanite god, El, was fundamentally a creator god,[86] and that the names, El Elyon, and El Olam, found in the Old Testament, were originally appellations for El that were related to his function as creator. This would make it quite possible that the blessings of fertility would have originally been connected with the Canaanite El cults. The connection between the blessing of fertility and the god, El, is evident in the following excerpt from Ugaritic literature:

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[84] Gunkel has some reservation about assigning this to J but has difficulty in avoiding it due to its presence in a long J narrative (p. 303); Procksch (p. 155), Eissfeldt (Hex.-Syn., p. 47), Skinner (p. 263) assign it to J. Noth attributes 24, 25a to a redactor (UP, p. 30).

[85] KS, p. 67.

(the)n came the companies of the gods, and
   Puissant Baal spake up:
'(Now) come, O Kindly One (El Be) nign!
Wilt thou not bless (Keret) the Noble,
   Not beatify the Beloved, Lad of El?'
A cup (El) takes (in) (his) hand,
   a flagon in (his) (right hand).
   Indeed he blesses (his servant).
El blesses Keret,
   (Beatifi)es the Beloved, Lad of El:
'The wo(man thou ta)k'st, O Keret,
   The woman thou tak'st into thy house,
   The maid thou bring'st into thy court,
Shall bear seven sons unto thee;
   Yea, eight she'll produce for thee,
Shall bear Yassib (ysb) the Lad,. . .[87]

From this evidence it is perfectly clear that one of the characteristic functions of El in the Ugaritic cult was that of giving his blessing of fertility. As the Israelite tribes settled in Canaan and came into contact with the cult of El it seems quite likely, therefore, that the concept of blessing and fertility would have entered their own traditions. It would have found a natural point of contact in their need of descendants reflected in an old passage such as Gen. 15:1ff.[88] It is significant that this concept was not at all rejected as was the later Baal fertility cult during the prophetic era but was given its place in the patriarchal narratives and allowed to make a substantial contribution to their own store of religious conceptions.[89]

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[86] Frank Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," Harvard Theological Review, 15 (1962), pp. 240f.

[87] "Legend of Keret," Tablet B, ANET, p. 146, lines 11-26; see also "The Tale of Aqhat," lines 18-52, Tablet A, where the evidence is equally as unambiguous, p. 150.

[88] "Es ist möglich, ja wahrscheinlich, dass der Begriff des Segens

(2) Hagar and Abraham

The unification of the Hagar narratives with the figure of Abraham took place in the same stage of the tradition as the unification of Isaac and Abraham. Here, just as in the unification of Isaac and Abraham, a form of the promise of increase is found. The older of these similar narratives is 21:10ff. (see below) which is completely independent of the figure of Abraham and is a complete, self-contained unit. During the time when these figures were coming together in the tradition, the narrative in ch. 16 arose which placed Hagar in Abraham's household and made him the father of Ishmael. Gen. 16:10ff. provided the opportunity for the blessing to be given to Ishmael at the earliest possible time in the same way that Gen. 22 provided the opportunity for the blessing to be given to Isaac. The blessing formula used here is different from that found in 26:24, 26:4, and 22:16 only in that the verb is in the Qal rather than the Hiphil, and the illustrative figure used resembles more closely the one found in 15:5.

The blessing of increase (though it is not called a blessing here) is followed by an announcement of the birth of a son, the naming of the son, and a tribal saying about him. The secondary nature of this passage is evidenced in the very loose connection between these varied elements.[90]

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seine weittragends Bedeutung in der Religion des Alten Testaments gewann, als die jahwistischen Stämme zur Landnahme in Kanaan Kamen," Horst, p. 194.

[89] Cf. Scharbert, *Solidarität in Segen und Fluch*, pp. 168ff.

[90] See the analysis of Type III below for a evaluation of the sources.

These same elements are not found joined together in this way anywhere else in Genesis. Because of the context, the second element, "Behold you are with child, and shall bear a son," can scarcely be called a promise, and it is even somewhat late to be called an announcement.[91]

The promise of nationhood in 21:18 is joined to the announcement of the angel so that it serves as the reason for it. This phrase corresponds to 21:13, 12:2, and 46:3.

21:13	וְגַם אֶת־בֶּן־הָאָמָה לְגוֹי אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ
12:2	וְאֶעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל
46:3	כִּי־לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשִׂימְךָ שָׁם
21:18	כִּי־לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ

It belongs to the last stage of the tradition before the insertion of the P material. The goal of nationhood which is established in 12:2 is reached in the final promise to Ishmael in 21:18 and to the last patriarch, Jacob, in 46:3.

What relationship does the promise of nationhood have to the promise of increase? In the traditions prior to this promise is not brought into direct relationship to the promise of increase. It is implied, however, that it is the goal of this promise since the first promise to Hagar in ch. 16 is that of increase, and the last in ch. 21, that of nationhood. This implication is drawn out and made explicit in the P material (17:6, 16, 20; 28:3). When it is announced in 46:3 that Israel shall be made into a גוי-גדול in Egypt, this means then that the promises of increase will be fulfilled in the emergence of Israel as a nation. Since the fulfillment of this promise is clearly understood to have taken place prior to the entrance into the land (Num. 23:10), this promise was accepted into the Israelite traditions only as an aspect of their former religion which was no longer relevant to their present situation. This is the reason Yahweh is not directly connected to the promise of increase or even nationhood in Genesis and is always connected with the promise of land. During the early days of the amphictyony the promise of land was still very definitely outstanding, and it was the God of the amphictyony, Yahweh, who called the leaders and led the battles which brought the land under Israelite control.[92] The promise of land was Yahweh's promise to fulfill and even where the promise occurs in Genesis before the name, Yahweh, was supposedly revealed, it was still understood as Yahweh's promise.[93]

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[91] Westermann terms ch. 16 a promise narrative and considers the promise of a son in vs. 11 to be an original component. Since a form analysis of 16:7ff. and 21:18ff. reveals basically the same structure in both, the real climax of this story in ch. 16 would come when Hagar is instructed to return to Abraham, as it does in ch. 21 when she is instructed to pick up the child and only then sees the means of saving it. Since a promise of increase (i.e., in 21:18ff., nationhood) seems to be joined tightly to the angel's announcement in 21:18ff., it can be assumed that some kind of promise is appropriate there. The assorted elements that are found in 16:10ff., however, make it impossible to determine which of these was the original. Certainly none of them are so tightly joined to their context either in regard to content or literarily, that any one could be called the climax to this story. (FAT, p. 20).

(3) Jacob and Abraham

The principal passage to be considered here is Gen. 28:10-22. The lines of tradition in this narrative completely skip over the Isaac traditions and go back to Abraham in 12:3 and 13:14. The promise of land is again primary. Its formulation varies decidedly from the promise in 12:7 and 15:18, however.

The promises in 28:13 and 13:14 have two basic characteristics in common. First, both are formulated in exactly the same way, with allowance made for adjustments to the contexts in which they stand.

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[92] "Im Vertrauen auf diese persönliche Hilfe Jahweh führte Israel seine heiligen Kriege," Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951), p. 31.

[93] This means that the presence of the name Yahweh in the SI formulae in Genesis does not necessarily presuppose a different source with a different view of the time when the name of Yahweh was first revealed.

28:13 הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ
13:15 כִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה רֹאֶה לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֲךָ עַד־עוֹלָם

The major adjustment to the context in both narratives—the use of the appropriate verb—is also the same. Just as the phrase אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ connects the promise of land to the story of the dream in 28:13, so the phrase אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה רֹאֶה connects the promise of land to the previous story that tells of Yahweh's command for Abraham to lift up his eyes and view the land in all of its length and breadth.

Furthermore, the illustrative figure connected with the promise of increase is the same, כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ. This is significant since this figure was not used in any of the other multiplicity promises in Genesis and must be considered therefore, to stem from an independent tradition. To be sure, the promise of increase in Gen. 13 makes use of a different verb (שׂוּם) than ch. 28 (היה) and is greatly expanded.

13:16 וְשַׂמְתִּי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אִם־יוּכַל אִישׁ
לִמְנוֹת אֶת עֲפַר הָאָרֶץ גַּם־זַרְעֲךָ יִמָּנֶה
28:14 וְהָיָה זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפָרַצְתָּ יָמָּה וָקֵדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה

This expansion, however, makes use of another image similar to a Jacob tradition in 32:12 (גם זרעך ימנה), as well as the Hagar story in 16:10, and can be considered as a fairly common way of expanding any promise of this type.

The second basic, common characteristic these narratives share is that they both contain old Canaanite cultic legends that have been brought into Israelite traditions and vastly reinterpreted. That Gen. 28:10ff. makes use of an old pre-Israelite Canaanite cultic legend has been shown particularly well by Victor Maag. The original legend, he thinks, may well go back to the early days of the temple around 2000 B.C., and in its pre-Israelite form may have been the tale of a giant who erected the great _masseba_ in the temple there, after which he honored the god who dwelt in the stone by anointing it. He notes as well that revelation through the means of a dream was characteristic of the god, El, according to the Ugaritic legends.[94] Also behind 13:14ff., Westermann believes there was an old Canaanite story which told of Baal's acquisition of land by ceremonially walking through it.[95] Since both of these stories are located at or in the vicinity of Bethel, it seems very likely that Gen. 13:14 as well as 28:10 were old Canaanite mythological tales associated with the temple at Bethel. If both of these tales were reinterpreted and brought into the Israelite traditions at approximately the same time, this would explain why they have such strong common stylistic characteristics in the most distinctively Israelitic parts— the promises. It means, as well, that the final form of the promise of land in Gen. 28 would not have been fixed until after the unification of the figures of Jacob and Abraham and therefore at a time after the rise of the amphictyony. The traditionists who reworked both the old Abraham and Jacob traditions had already accepted the unification of these figures in one genealogy. There would be no evidence here, therefore, of a genuine old patriarchal promise of land.

The final element in the series of promises in Gen. 28:10ff. is the promise that Jacob and his descendants will be a means of blessing to the nations. The wording here is identical to 12:3, and it is certain that this element must have originated in approximately the same time as 12:1-3, thus in one of the last stages of the composition of the major patriarchal narrative.

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[94] Victor Maag, _Asiatischen Studien_, pp.125ff. See also Eissfeldt, "Der Gott Bethel," _Kleine Schriften_, pp. 206-233.

[95] _FAT_, p. 30.

In 28:15 a completely different element is joined to the string of promises. It is composed of the promise of accompaniment found also in 26:3, 26:24, and 46:3, 4, and an assurance that Yahweh will not leave Jacob until he brings to pass what he has promised.

28:15 וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ
26:24 אַל־תִּירָא כִּי־אִתְּךָ אָנֹכִי
46:4 אָנֹכִי אֵרֵד עִמְּךָ ... וְאָנֹכִי אַעַלְךָ

This passage clearly stands in a close relationship to the vow which Jacob utters in vss. 20ff. Both presuppose that a problem is raised by Jacob's journey into the eastern lands which requires additional assurance of the presence of God. The situation is very similar to that in 46:3. There Jacob is about to go into Egypt, and he is assured that God is with him and that he shall be brought back to his homeland again. This clearly is a later promise which presupposes the Exodus. The pattern of departure and return which is so fundamental to the whole of the Exodus tradition is also reflected in both 28:15 and 20. Since Jacob was originally associated with the land east of the Jordan and not the site of the Jacob amphictyony west of the Jordan, the amphictyonic traditions would have had to account for this association of Jacob with the east Jordan country. This was done by using the same pattern of God-directed departure and return that was used to account for the Israelites in Egypt. It is likely that vs. 15 was added to this narrative by the same hand that added vss. 20-22 at the time that this west Jordan legend was integrated into the larger Genesis narrative. The conclusion then is that the amphictyonic viewpoint is present in every section of the promise in Gen. 28, and the whole of it belongs to a late stage of the Pentateuchal traditions.

(c) Later period

The chief passages to be considered in this section are 35:9ff., 17:1-14; 28:3, 4. The unity of these traditions is seen in the use of a new name for God, אֵל שַׁדַּי, rather than the God of the Fathers; and by the common, formal and stylistic characteristics. In tracing the history of this tradition a purposeful relationship between the promises found in these P legends and those in the earlier J, E material can be seen. One of the primary intentions of these narratives seems to be to give a definitive answer to a question that was apparently insufficiently answered by the previous traditions, i.e., what is the relationship of Yahweh to the blessing of numerous descendants?

The concept of blessing found in the introduction is made fundamental to the whole of 35:9ff. as it is also in 17:16, 20ff., and 28:3ff. The narrative does not move directly to the promises but reports the changing of Jacob's name in vs. 10 in spite of the fact that this was already recorded in 32:28. This is a clear indication that this narrative has only a very loose relation to the larger narrative in which it now stands.

Then in 35:11 El Shaddai appears in a SI formula. Following this is the command to be fruitful (פְּרֵה) and to multiply (וּרְבֵה). These verbs are used in the promise of increase in 17:2, 6 but not in the imperative form. Again in 48:3 they occur together but in the first person. Joined to the promise of increase (in the stronger form of a command) is the promise of nationhood. The phrase "assembly of nations (or peoples)" is used also in 28:3 and 48;3 with the verbs היה and נתן respectively.

35:11 גּוֹי וּקְהַל גּוֹיִם יִהְיֶה מִמֶּךָּ

28:3 וְהָיִיתָ לִקְהַל עַמִּים
48:3 וּנְתַתִּיךָ לִקְהַל עַמִּים

The promise of nationhood occurs repeatedly in ch. 17, however, but with different wording.

17:4 וְהָיִיתָ לְאַב הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם
5 כִּי אַב־הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ
6 וּנְתַתִּיךָ לְגוֹיִם
16 וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם
20 וּנְתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל

The promise of nationhood here, in contrast to 12:3, 21:17, and 46:3 (note that the phrase גוי גדול associated with the promise to Hagar in 21:17 has been retained in 17:20), has been brought into direct relationship with the promise of increase and expanded to become an assembly or multitude of nations. This makes it perfectly clear that the ultimate goal of the promise of increase is now nationhood. The meaning of the phrase המון גוים or קהל עמים is not that Israel will keep expanding into many more nations or that her salvation will be extended universally.[96] The reference is to the many varied peoples that were joined together to form the amphictyony and later that were included in the kingdom of Israel.[97]

Now a further expansion of the multiplicity/nationhood promise can be seen: kings as well shall stem from Abraham (17:16), Sarah (17:6) and Jacob (35:11). With this addition the promise of increase reaches its final stage of interpretation. The kingship in Israel is here understood as the fulfillment of the promise of increase given to the patriarchs.[98]

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[96] von Rad, Genesis, p. 195.

[97] Gunkel maintains this as one possibility though he adds to it the possibility that this might also refer to the Ishmaelites and Moabites, Genesis, p. 195.

[98] Perhaps it is only appropriate that the originally Canaanite blessing

It is in ch. 17 that the final, definitive task of integrating the promise of fertility into the Israelite traditions is accomplished. First of all in vs. 16 the promise of a son to Sarah found in its earlier form in ch. 18, is here joined to the blessing motif, the promise of nationhood and kingship. In vs. 20 the promise to Hagar, found in its earlier stages in ch. 16:10 and 28:18, is joined to the promise of the blessing of fertility, and of kingship (12 princes) and nationhood. Both of these promises are actually grounded upon the primary promise to Abraham in vss. 1-8. This extensive promise has a clear, though complex structure:

a. Command to walk and be blameless
b. Promise of a covenant
    -promise of "increase"
c. Affirmative response of Abram
d. Covenant declaration
    -promise of nationhood
    -changing of name
        -reason is promise of nationhood
    -promise of fruitfulness, nationhood, and kingship
e. Greatly expanded covenant declaration
    -promise of land
    -promise of himself ("and I will be their God")

The baroque nature of this structure makes it quite likely that it has undergone a number of expansions at various times. The second element, b., is the most decisively important. The promise of increase is grounded upon the covenant which in turn is grounded upon Abraham's obedience presupposed by element a. Here the tradition is probably dependent upon the form of 35:9, but 35:9 grounded this promise upon the blessing concept as in the previous stage of the tradition, whereas this passage relates it directly to the covenant concept which in turn is related to the simple command of God to Abraham.[99] This causes the promise to be based upon the distinctively

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and multiplicity motif should finally be connected with the Canaanite political form, the kingship.

[99] von Rad here notes the parallel to Gen. 12:1 (Genesis, p. 192).

Israelite way of conceiving of the God-man relationship and removes it from the world of magic and superstition often associated with blessing and cursing.

Element d. is primarily concerned with grounding the promise of nationhood upon the covenant. This has been expanded by relating this promise to the new name which Yahweh gives Abram as an indication of the certainty of the promise.[100] The section closes with a re-capitulation of the major promises associated with the fertility blessing. Whereas multiplicity was mentioned in b., now fruitfulness is promised (וְהִפְרֵתִי —note the use of both together in 35:10), along with nationhood and kingship. All of these have been grounded upon the covenant declaration in vs. 4 (אֲנִי הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתָּךְ).

The promise of land is attached to the end in section e. with an enlarged covenant declaration as an introduction. The promise of land here has the same stylistic characteristics as in 35:12 and 48:4.

35:12 וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם וּלְיִצְחָק לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה
וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
48:4 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם
17:8 וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֵת אֶרֶץ מְגֻרֶיךָ אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ
כְּנַעַן לַאֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם

In the blessing of Isaac in 28:4 it differs from the others in that it speaks of taking possession of the land which was given to your fathers. Following this is the declaration, otherwise associated only with Yahweh, "I will be their God." (Ex. 6:7).

The new beginning made in the introduction to the land promise in vs. 7 indicates the loose relationship it has to the preceding promise.[101]

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[100] Note the similar element in 12:2, "I will make your name great."

[101] Procksch, following Steuernagel, accepts the possibility that

Just as the promise of increase could be added as a second element to a promise of land given by Yahweh, the "God of the Fathers," so, too, could the promise of land be added as a final element to a promise of increase given by El Shaddai. In this way there was no absolute distinction between the promises given by El Shaddai and Yahweh (they were in fact the same God according to Ex. 6:1ff.), and yet an important difference was retained. El Shaddai was primarily associated with "the blessings of the breasts and of the womb" (Gen. 49:25), while Yahweh was primarily associated with "the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob" (Ex. 6:8).[102] El Shaddai was thus pictured as the typical God of the patriarchal period when the fundamental religious concern was the birth of children, whereas Yahweh is pictured as the God of the nation when the major concern was land.

In conclusion, what can be said about the origin of the El Shaddai tradition? Is this picture of El Shaddai supported by religio-historical investigations? Frank Cross says, "It is no longer possible to doubt that the Priestly tradition rests ultimately on historical memories preserved in conservative cultic materials."[103] He vouches especially for the antiquity of Gen. 49:24. On the basis of an etymological relationship between El Shaddai and the Ugaritic designation for divinity ṯd/ṯdy, he says that the name means "El, the Mountain One."[104] This image associates El with the cosmic mountain, the Weltberg, which stands at the point where heaven and hell come together and is the seat of the divine council. As such, it would then be associated with El, the creator god, primarily at the point

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this is a secondary accretion to this passage, p. 519.

[102] The other passages containing promises (32:12; 48:16; 50:24) do not play significant roles in the tradition history of the promise.

[103] "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," HTR, p. 244; similarly, Gunkel, p. 266.

[104] Ibid., p. 250.

of his function as the ruler of the universe. Cross is not able to come to a firm conclusion as to whether Shaddai was an old Amorite deity which the patriarchs later joined to the Canaanite, El, or whether it is originally an epithet of El. The fact that this deity is not associated with a particular cult site in Genesis seems to be the major reason he raises the possibility that it might have been origianlly an Amorite deity which was brought by the patriarchs to Canaan. There is some evidence that El Shaddai was originally associated with a Canaanite cult center, however.

First, it is well to remember that in Genesis there are Canaanite deities associated with Jerusalem (El Elyon), Beersheba (El Olam), and Shechem (El Berit).[105] Only Bethel, among the major Israelite cult centers seem to have lacked such a deity.[106] This seems most striking in light of the antiquity and importance of Bethel as a cult center. With this in mind it is almost too coincidental that the most significant Canaanite deity in the Pentateuch, El Shaddai, is not attached to a cult center. Is there any evidence of a connection of El Shaddai with Bethel?

The most direct evidence is 35:9, of course, which portrays El Shaddai as the god who appears to Jacob at Bethel. Apparently the P writer saw no problem in depicting a revelation of El Shaddai at the outset of the narrative and then at the conclusion having Jacob name the place Bethel. For him, the god at Bethel was named El Shaddai and not "God of Bethel" or simply "Bethel." There is no further direct connection of El Shaddai with Bethel, however. The appearance of this god to Abraham in ch. 17 is not localized, and the only other appearance is to Moses in Egypt (Ex. 6).

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[105] Cf. Oesterly and Robinson, pp. 54ff.

[106] Eissfeldt in his article, "Der Gott Bethel," has shown on religio-historical grounds that the name, Bethel, was itself, the name of the deity honored at Bethel. The name would have been appropriate for the god who dwelt in a stone. He shows from West-Semitic texts that a stone can be named bêt'el, house of god. This certainly does not rule out the possibility, however, that a divine name more closely related to the world of Ugaritic mythology could also have been honored at Bethel. Kl. Schr., pp. 206 ff.; Maag points out a basic inconsistency between the Ugaritic El and the God of Bethel, "Das Numen des Steines hatte seinen Sitz im Stein. El aber wohnte im Himmel. Diese beiden Vorstellungen waren nicht widerspruchslos miteinander zu verbinden." He goes on to show that in the Bethel legend contained in 28:10ff. the dream element represents the transcendent element while the name of the stone points to the immanent. This raises the possibility that there could have been another El tradition at Bethel belonging to the milieu of the Ugaritic religion alongside the older immanent type of numen. Asiatischen Studien, p. 131.

There is, however, a rather strong piece of evidence that associates El Shaddai with Bethel indirectly. A very old saying about El Shaddai is found in the blessing of Joseph (49:25).[107] The tribe of Joseph settled in the middle Palestinian area in the vicinity of Bethel. The city of Bethel was reportedly taken by this tribe (Judg. 1:22). Since it was Bethel that was later chosen as the cult center of the northern kingdom it is very likely that it was used as a tribal cult site by Joseph during the early stages of the settlement of the land. It would have been during this time that the traditions of a Canaanite deity such as El Shaddai could have found their way into the traditions of the tribe of Joseph (or those of Ephraim and Manasseh). Because of the later importance of Bethel during the period of the kingship, the name of the Canaanite deity formerly honored there could have been chosen by the P traditionists as the prototype of the pre-Yahwistic religion. The conclusion would then be that El Shaddai is an old Canaanite deity who was a creator and giver of the blessing of fertility; he passed into the Israelite traditions through the Joseph tribes who settled in the central Palestinian area.

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[107] von Rad believes 25b-26 to be a very old type of blessing of fertility, but since El Shaddai has been shown by Cross to be associated with the creative processes, there is no reason to suppose that this ancient blessing was not originally associated with him (*Genesis*, p. 423). There is little agreement on the age of the historical events reflected in 24. Täubler believes the battle which is referred to was the battle at Ebenezer in I Sam. 7 between Ephraimites and Philistines (*Biblische Studien*, p. 209); Hans-Jürgen Zobel sees here only reflections of the conflict between the northern and southern kingdoms, *Stämmesspruche und Geschichte* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1965), p. 123. Meyer believes the "Rock of Israel" in 24 refers to Bethel (p. 283).

(d). The response

In each of the narratives in Type I some response is made by man to the oath he has been given by God. In 12:7 and 26:25 the narrative says that each man built an altar. The wording is exactly the same in both.

12:7 וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאֶה אֵלָיו
26:25 וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ

This is obviously a construction of the writer since there is no trace of an old individual tradition in either passage. Since the other two elements of these passages have also proven to be secondary it is clear that both of these passages were constructions of the writers of the book of Genesis. This does not mean that the form itself was not related to a definite situation in life nor that the promise contained in it could not have been taken from older cultic materials. To the contrary, it has been shown above that the basic form was taken from the oath ceremony practiced among the Semites. The building of an altar was a way of symbolizing the divine presence, and when an oath was sworn the person would place his hand on the altar or offer a sacrifice upon it to establish contact with the deity. Several important changes are in evidence here, however. The altar building takes place after the oath has been given because the traditionists were attempting to make the revelation of the word of God the starting point rather than some action or word of Abraham. So rather than placing a genuine old lamentation and oracular response such as Gen. 15:1-6 as the initial revelation of God to Abraham and Isaac, they placed these short oath accounts which founded the patriarchal religion clearly upon a manifestation of God's powerful word.[108]

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[108] This is even more clearly the case in the later passages such as

The conclusion of J-1 is not a simple altar building, but a complex series of responses both verbal and ritualistic. In vs. 16 upon waking from his sleep Jacob exclaims, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I did not know it." This is the first time any of the persons involved in these stories has spoken, and so it is likely that this verse preserves something of the older special tradition which stands behind this account. This sudden exclamation is a cry of discovery: Yahweh is in 'this place,' i.e., in the stone. It seems, however, to be a rather strong response from a man just awakened from a deep, dreaming sleep. The response in vs. 17 is much more appropriate, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." It is possible, as was noted above, that two sources stand behind these dual responses, but it is also possible that this passage is a blending together of two different types of legends. It has already been noted in vs. 11 that Jacob stumbled upon this place (i.e., the rock). The use of the verb פגע could not have been without purpose since it is seldom found in Genesis (only in Gen. 32:1). Instances are known where primitive man believed that divine power dwelt in a stone over which he had stumbled. Van der Leeuw tells of an instance when a west African while on a safari stumbled over a stone and cried, "Ha! are you there?" Since he was on a trip he picked up the stone and carried it with him that he might possess the mysterious power of this stone.[109] This story is cited as an illustration of how an encounter with

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12:1 and 26:1 where the wanderings of Abraham and Isaac are based on the simple command of God. In 12:1 even the appearance formula has been omitted. The same is true of the Jacob promise narratives, but the situation is more complex there (28:10ff. and 25:9ff).

[109] *Phänomenologie*, p. 19; see also Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 7. One interesting thing about this little story is that when it is cited in both of these scholarly books the quotation of the African Negro is retained. This shows how firmly implanted this exclamation is in a story such as this even when it is related today in a scholarly book!

a power that stands over against man is understood as an encounter with divinity. Eliade has given an excellent description of the way in which ancient man understood such an encounter:

> Above all, stone is. It always remains itself, and exists of itself; and, more important still, it strikes. Before he even takes it up to strike, man finds in it an obstacle—if not to his body, at least to his gaze—and ascertains its hardness, its roughness, its power. Rock shows him something that transcends the precariousness of his humanity; an absolute mode of being. Its strength, its motionlessness, its size and its strange outlines are none of them human; they indicate the presence of something that fascinates, terrifies, attracts and threatens, all at once. In its grandeur, its hardness, its shape and its colour, man is faced with a reality and a force that belong to some world other than the profane world of which he is himself a part.[110]

The original form of this story could then have told of nothing more than that a man stumbled over a stone in this place and discovered the presence of divinity. Since the stone was too large to be carried he had to simply stand it up or set it aside from the others in some way to indicate its special holiness. The phrase, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I did not know it," would have belonged to this original story (though now the name, Yahweh, has been inserted).

It is at this point that the incongruity in this story becomes evident. Jacob in fact did not discover the divine power by stumbling over a stone. This occurred by means of a dream. The incongruity between the encounter with divinity in the stone and in the dream is expressed in the two names Jacob gives this place in 28:17 and 25:13. He calls it the "house of El" and the "gate of heaven." The house of El clearly refers to the stone,[111] and on the basis of van der Leeuw's example, this could have been discovered without a dream. Gunkel thought that Beth-el originally refered to the heavenly palace in which God dwelt and was only secondarily attached to the stone, but the primitive background of this story disproves that.[112] The stone was itself the house of god originally. This does illustrate the basic inconsistency between these two images, however. The image "gate of heaven" presupposes that God dwells in heaven and not in the stone.

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[110] Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (Cleveland and N.Y.: The World Publishing Co., 1963), p. 216; see also, pp. 227f. for a discussion of the stone at Bethel.

[111] Cf. Eissfeldt, "Der Gott Bethel," Kl. Schr., pp. 206-233.

What can be said about the origin and meaning of this second name, "Gate of Heaven"? Gunkel cites an interesting example from Mithraism which pictures a series of gates on top of one another forming a ladder going up to heaven. It was on this ladder that the souls of the dead ascended to heaven.[113] This dramatically illustrates that the gate symbolized the passageway between heaven and earth. If Speiser is correct in thinking of the stairway mentioned in the dream as resembling a Mesopotamian ziggurat, then these two images of the stairway and the gate connect this legend to a whole nexus of concepts in ancient Mesopotamian mythology.[114] Eliade has shown that the ziggurat in ancient Mesopotamia was a symbol of the cosmic mountain which stood at the center of the earth and served as a connecting link between heaven and earth. Every city could then think of itself as a place where the divine world touched this world. It is for this reason that a great city bore the name Babylon, i.e., Bab-ilani, "door of the gods."[115] It would thus seem that the symbols of the stairway and the gate of heaven have been secondarily taken from the world of Mesopotamian and perhaps also Canaanite mythology and associated with the cult center at Bethel whose original myth came out of a more primitive stage of religion.[116]

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[112] Genesis, p. 317.

[113] Ibid.; also, Andreas Resch, Der Traum in Heilsplan Gottes, p. 72.

[114] Similarly, von Rad, Genesis, p. 279.

[115] Eliade, Patterns, p. 376.

Now the question is how this image of the gate of heaven is to be interpreted out of its Old Testament backgrounds. What does it mean in the Israelite religion for Yahweh to come to the gate of heaven? The image in the Old Testament which resembles this the most is the image of the windows of heaven from which Yahweh's rain and blessings come (Gen. 7:11; 8:2; II Kings 7:2, 19). Though a promise of blessing is given in 28:14, the main emphasis of this passage is on the promise of land, and thus on the giving of Yahweh's oath. As it was shown above, the motifs of the blessing and oath were originally separate. The image of the window of heaven is more closely associated with the blessing and thus is not a direct parallel to the gate.

There is one very important passage in which Yahweh does seem to appear at a gate. In the vision of the call of Isaiah it is reported that when God spoke, "the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called. . ." (6.4). It seems that the throne of God here is located at the gate of the temple, and thus symbolically at the gate of heaven.[117] That Yahweh, pictured as a king on his throne, is actually envisioned at the gate of the temple here, finds support in the customs of the Israelite king. In II Sam. 19:3, 9 it is reported that ". . . the king arose, and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, 'Behold, the king is sitting in the gate;' and all the people came before the king." On such occasions the king would make himself available to hear complaints, to make announcements and decide cases since the gate was also the place of the court in Israel. In Isaiah's vision he issues his decision about the guilt of Israel and decides their punishment. It is appropriate then that his throne be at the gate.

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[116] The association of the stairway with the image of the cosmic mountain would also support the contention stated above that El Shaddai, the One of the Mountain, was the name of the deity belonging to this stage of the mythical tradition at Bethel.

[117] Gunkel has seen the relationship between the image here and that in Gen. 28:10ff. (p. 319). For the religious significance of thresholds, see Eliade, "The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds—and at the same time the paradoxical place

The significance of the "Gate of Heaven" in Israel would thus be that it is the place where Yahweh comes to speak, to issue his edicts and announcements; i.e., it would be the place of the epiphany of the word of God. There are strong indications that this is precisely the meaning of this phrase in Gen. 28. The "Gate of Heaven" is not mentioned in 35:13. Rather than saying that Bethel was the "Gate of Heaven" it says that it was the "place where God had spoken with him." If we can assume a knowledge by P of the earlier tradition, then this phrase would simply be an interpretation of the older image of the "Gate of Heaven." The significance of the gate would then be that it is a place where God comes to speak, i.e., to issue his promissory oaths, etc.

Gen. 28:10ff. would then be composed of two separate myths that have been joined. The earliest was the simple account of why the stone at Bethel was holy, similar to the story of the west African Negro. The later element was the dream which made use of Canaanite mythological motifs such as the stairway reaching to heaven and the "Gate of Heaven." These two were joined during the time when Bethel was still a Canaanite cult center. Then the legend passed into the Israelite traditions probably during the time of the Leah amphictyony. The amphictyonic consciousness began to influence the legend so that when it later was accepted by the writers of

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where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible." (p. 25)

Genesis, both images had taken on a new and distinctively Israelite meaning. Yahweh now stands "by" the stairway to give his promissory oath to Jacob, and Bethel becomes the "Gate of Heaven" because God has come there to speak.

In vs. 18 one finds the ritual act of raising and anointing the stone. The stone is thereby designated as a witness to the oath. It was anointed in keeping with the frequent custom in oath ceremonies. (See above.) The final act in this series is the naming of the place. Because of the close association of divinity with the stone, in the older story this act of naming the place was equivalent to naming the God.

Now a more complex response of Jacob has been attached in vs. 20. Jacob makes a most unusual vow. Usually vows involve assuming responsibility for some duty. Certain conditions can be stipulated which would release one from the vow (Gen. 24). God is usually the witness to the oath and the one who is to see that it is kept. Here, however, this vow obligates God to do something for Jacob and in return—if God does these things—Jacob will accept Yahweh as his God! Since it doubtless presupposes the fulfillment of these obligations by God—i.e., the return of Jacob (the Joseph tribes or Isaac clans) from the east Jordan area—its original purpose was probably to persuade the recalcitrant members of the Israelite amphictyony to assume their obligations to serve Yahweh. This would explain why the payment of the tithe has also been attached to the end.

Another ritual response follows the oath by El Shaddai in ch. 17. In vss. 9-14 Abraham is instructed with regard to the rite of circumcision. Since this is clearly a sign of having entered into a covenant with Yahweh, it is a most appropriate ritual action to follow these oaths. That this chapter has been structured to allow either instruction about the ritualistic response or the response itself to follow both groups of oaths, is an indication of the strength of the pattern: appearance, oath, response. This is the basic form of every one of the Type I vision accounts.

Conclusion

The basic form of this narrative is: (1) appearance of the deity, (2) the promise usually preceded by a SI, (3) the response of man usually in the form of an altar construction. This form, as the examination of these elements above has shown, can best be explained on the basis of the tribal oath ceremony. Now however, the deity himself appears to give his oath to man rather than simply appearing as a witness to human oaths. The response of man to this event is usually the construction of an altar to mark the place where it occurred, and to serve as a reminder of it in the future. In ch. 17, however, circumcision becomes the sign which will remind future generations of the promise.

This form, with the appearance and promise of God followed by the response of man, is ideally suited to the theological intention of the writer, which is to make the word of God the basis of patriarchal religion.

The tradition history of these narratives is the most fully illuminated by an analysis of the form of the promises contained in these narratives since the form of the promise has gradually become more lengthy and inclusive in the course of history. In the earliest, pre-Israelite period there were only the single promises: the promise of a son and promise of land. But in these Type I narratives there is no simple promise of a son. The closest thing is ch. 26:23f., but this is a promise of blessing and increase which does not belong to the primary stage in the development but enters the tradition during the time of tribal unification. In this brief narrative there is also no trace of an older independent legend of any kind. The simple promise of land does occur in a Type I legend (ch. 12:7), but this was shown to be dependent upon ch. 15:18 which is the oldest legend containing this promise. The promise here, however, is inserted in the structure of a covenant ceremony which is of late origin. This means that the promise of land does not belong to the oldest stratum of tradition in Genesis.

The oldest material in any of these legends seems to be the ancient cultic legends of Bethel found in 28:10ff. (and in 13:18 as well). The analysis of ch. 28:10ff. showed that two old sagas have been combined in this account: one told of the discovery of the cult center when a traveller stumbled over a stone there and discovered the presence of deity in it, and the other was the later Canaanite legend which proclaimed Bethel to be the "Gate of Heaven" where the transcendent gods could descend to earth on a heavenly stairway. In the P material there may also be a reminiscence of an old Bethel legend concerning the Canaanite deity, El Shaddai. Here there is no trace of any older narrative material, however. The promises in these narratives do not belong to this early stage.

Since the genuine old material in narratives of this type seems to be scarce, the origin of these passages has to be sought in the theological and narrative needs of the writers. These writers found promises in the older traditions such as 15:1ff., 7ff., and ch. 18, but they were found in narratives which were not appropriate to serve as foundation stones for their new interpretation of the patriarchal traditions because they centered upon the expression of man's need rather than upon the promise of god. The solution to this difficulty was to place the promise of God in a form which was suitable. This turned out to be the basic form of the oath ceremony which was an earlier, simpler version of the covenant ceremony, at the center of their own religion. This was appropriate because such ceremonies were a part of the tribal life of the earlier period even though they were then concerned primarily with establishing relations between tribes rather than between the tribe and its God. This form was adequate for making the word of God appear to be the single foundation stone for the life and religion of each patriarch. The word of promise would furthermore, serve both a narrative and a theological function in that it would serve as a unifying motif which could hold together all of the very diverse patriarchal materials and as a bridge connecting patriarchal religion with the covenant faith of Yahwism. Even where other motifs were actually more fundamental to the patriarchal traditions themselves, such as the motif of the struggle in the Jacob traditions (see below), the promise was nevertheless inserted so as to constitute an overarching theme.

It is in light of the function of these narratives of Type I in giving unity to the diverse patriarchal traditions that their tradition history should be approached. Different promises have been used to unify many of the independent bodies of traditions, and in certain crucial places almost all of the promises have been collected to form a single inclusive promise.

The promise of blessing and fertility seems to have its original place in the unification of the Abraham and Isaac traditions. The major Type I narrative which contains this promise alone is 26:23, but this short passage is undoubtedly dependent upon 22:16 ff. which stands at the conclusion of a narrative which brings about a unification of the figures of Abraham and Isaac. These are the only Type I passages which are concerned exclusively with the promise of increase. Where it is found elsewhere it is combined with the promise of land, so this must be considered its original location in the tradition. It is both theologically and historically appropriate that it should be here since it is through Isaac that the southern Abraham tribes are able to be connected genealogically with the more numerous northern Jacob tribes. It is thus through Isaac that the promise of increase is actually fulfilled.[118]

A quite similar promise of increase is also found in the agglomeration of promises in 26:1-5. Here it has been combined with the promise of land in this introductory promise narrative at the outset of the cycle of Isaac sagas in ch. 26. This is one of the obviously late passages used to join the Isaac sagas harmoniously with the overarching narrative structure of the Abraham and Jacob cycles.

The origin of the blessing of numerous descendants probably has to be sought in Canaan. It is quite possible that the motif of the promise of a son goes back to the pre-Palestinian period. There are, however, no genuine old legends which contain the multiplicity motif alone. The original Isaac cultic legend (Gen. 22, see below) told of the miraculous rescue of a child. Because the motif of the promise of a son, and the rescue of a child are, however, closely related to the multiplicity motif, it can be regarded as a secondary accretion to these older motifs which took place after tribal unification began on Canaanite soil.

The oldest narrative containing a promise of land is the Type II narrative, Gen. 15:7ff. This promise is now a part of a covenant ceremony, however, and probably originated during the time of the tribal confederacy at Hebron. The promise given at Shechem in ch. 12:7 is a later duplication of this older promise at the time when the southern Abraham traditions were being unified with the northern patriarchal traditions.

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[118] That this is the original place of this promise in the history of the tradition is supported by the fact that it is also the only kind of promise found in the Hagar Ishmael traditions whose unification with Abraham is parallel to that of Isaac.

There seems to be a separate land promise in the Bethel legend in ch. 28:10ff. Here it is joined to a special version of the promise of increase. The similarity in form and content between these promises and those in ch. 13:14ff., which is also an old Bethel legend, makes it likely that there was an independent land promise tradition in the north parallel to that in the south. This promise could well have originated during the days of the early Leah amphictyony when the Jacob tribes were attempting to establish themselves in the Bethel-Shechem area. At this time the Jacob tribes could have appropriated the ancient Bethel cultic saga (28:11, 12, 14, 15) making Jacob the founder of the cult center. The final form of this promise could not have originated until after the unification of the figures of Abraham and Jacob, however, because of the stylistic similarity between 28:10ff. and 13:16ff. Since at that time the promise of increase had already become a part of the patriarchal traditions through the unification of the Isaac-Abraham traditions, a promise of increase was also added to the promise of land by this school of traditionists. In addition, the promise of the blessing of other families of the earth through Jacob was added corresponding to ch. 12:3.

The final stage in the growth of ch. 28:10ff. was the addition of the promise of accompaniment in vs. 15, along with the concluding vow in vs. 20. This clearly serves to integrate this narrative into the larger pattern of the Jacob narratives. It probably represents a later stage of the redactional process, perhaps as late as the E redaction.

The final stage of the tradition history is represented by the addition of the P material in chs. 17 and 35:9ff. In these narratives the promise of increase is connected with the typical God of the patriarchal era, El Shaddai (perhaps the chief deity of the Canaanite pantheon at

Bethel). In ch. 17 the promise of land has been secondarily attached to the end of the series of promises in the last stage of the growth of this passage, because El Shaddai is primarily a god who gives fertility and not one who bestows land through conquest.[119] These passages are significant because they reflect two stages in the interpretation of the promise of increase. In 35:9ff. this promise is not based upon the concept of the blessing as in 26:23 but is a command which resembles the form of the apodictic law. In ch. 17 it is based upon the covenant which El Shaddai makes with Abraham. This is an indication of how an originally foreign concept such as the blessing of fertility was gradually given a more authentic Hebraic foundation.

B. Type II: The Lament

The passages to be considered in this type are Gen. 15 and 18:1ff. Because Gen. 18 presents some special problems it will be studied separately after the analysis of Gen. 15. The form of these passages varies sharply from the form of those included in Type I. Rather than being considered a variation of the same form they must be considered as a distinctly different Gattung with a different Sitz im Leben.

1. Genesis 15

a. Determination of the Basic Unit

Chapter 15 has only a very loose literary connection to its context. It is introduced by a single transition phrase, "after these things," and ends with a list of tribal names. Chapter 16 then begins a story about Sarah who is not mentioned at all in ch. 15. Thus ch. 15 itself clearly stands apart as an independent unit that is neither literarily nor dramatically joined to its context except in the most general sense.

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[119] This is supported by the fact that the sign of the covenant given here, circumcision, has nothing to do with a promise of land!

Chapter 15 itself, however, is not a unity, and the task of determining the original units of tradition behind these passages is exceedingly difficult. There has been no widespread agreement on the basic question of whether this chapter is composed of two continuous, interwoven, parallel sources, two basically independent units, each stemming from different sources, or two basically independent units, each in its present form being a compilation of two sources. Now it is necessary to look more closely at the results of the source analysis of this passage.

> Wellhausen divides the chapter into two basic units: vss. 1-6 and 7-21. He assigns vss. 1-6 in their present form to a Jehovistic redaction of an E passage. Verses 7-21 are basically J though vss. 13-16 represent a later insertion which he says resembles P; vss. 19-21 are later additions, and the reference to Ur of the Chaldeans is alien to J (Hexateuch, pp. 21, 22). Many other source critics find two parallel continuous sources running throughout the chapter though there is considerable disagreement as to what actually constitutes a duplication. Smend assigns to E: vss. 1, 3-6, 13-16, and to J: 2, 7-12, 17, 18. Gunkel and Procksch attempt to make more exacting source divisions. Gunkel identifies the E strand as: vss. 1b, a(b), 3a, 5, 11, 12a(b), 13a, 14 (in part), 16; and the J strand : 1a, b(c), 2a, 3b, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12a(a), b, 17, 18a, b(a); and the redactional additions as: vss. 7, 8, 13b, 14b(b), 15, 18b (b), 19-21. Noth follows the source division of Gunkel at many points assigning to E: 1b(a), 3a, 5, 13a (13b), 14a, b (a), 14b(b); and to J: 1a, b(b), 2a, 3b, 4, 6-12, 17, 18, (19-21), but believes that the original sources of vss. 1-6 and 7-21 were independent units rather than continuous narratives. He does believe that they form a literary unity in their present context (UP, p. 29), and attributes the whole to J, although he says that elements of the E variant have been interwoven. This two-source hypothesis has more recently received support from a religio-historical viewpoint in an article by Cazelles ("Connexions et Structure de Genesis XV," RB, July, 1962, 69:321-349). He argues that there are two parallel continuous narratives which stand behind the present text: a war and a posterity narrative. The war narrative is roughly equivalent to the J material and the posterity narrative to E. This thesis will be examined below.
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> There are a number of points of disagreement in these attempts to find two narrative sources running through this chapter. Eissfeldt, Smend, and Gunkel attribute vs. 2 or portions of it to J while Procksch assigns it to E. Then Gunkel and Procksch designate vs. 3 or portions of it to J while Eissfeldt and Smend assign it to E. There is no agreement here with regard to whether or not there are doublets in

vss. 2 and 3 or to the source to which these verses belong. The only agreement is that vss. 2 and 3 seem to be parallel. Furthermore, Gunkel, Noth, and Procksch assign vs. 4 to J while Eissfeldt and Smend give it to E. Similarly, Noth and Gunkel assign vs. 6 to J while Eissfeldt, Smend, and Procksch place it in the E source. There is agreement among these scholars only that vs. 5 and the first part of vs. 1 belong to E. There is not even agreement as to whether or not there are doublets in vss. 4-6. This has caused Simpson to regard the whole unit consisting of vss. 1-6 along with vs. 7 as being of late origin, probably after the exile. He contends that originally vss. 8-21 belonged after 13:17 and 15:1-7 was inserted at the time ch. 14 was added. [*Early Traditions of Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1942), pp. 73f.] Such appalling disagreement concerning the sources and literary history of this passage requires a new examination of the question from a form critical and traditio-historical viewpoint.

This new approach can begin with the view accepted by Kaiser in his traditio-historical study of this chapter, ("Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung von Genesis 15," *ZAW*, Vol. 70, 1958, p. 109) that it is composed of two originally independent units of tradition, vss. 1-6 and 7-21 which have acquired their duplications and alien elements through redaction. More will be said about this process when the individual verses are analyzed.

b. General Characteristics of the Form

Two figures are involved in the dramatic action in both of these passages—Yahweh and Abraham. The narrative in both consists of a dialogue in which both Yahweh and Abraham speak in contrast to the Type I narratives where only God spoke. It is, in fact, the utterance of Abraham that characterizes this form. In response to the SI of God which here contains a brief promise, Abraham laments about the lack of the very thing being promised him. The central distinguishing feature of both of these passages is thus the lament rather than the promise.

A further distinguishing characteristic of these narratives is that no mention is made of the place where this encounter with God occurred, whereas in Type I, the place was emphasized because an altar was erected on the site. Whether this is due to the fact that these were originally traditions belonging to nomads or to the special nature of the form will have to be answered in the course of the form analysis.

c. An Analysis of the Parts of the Form

At the outset the text itself must be examined, and any textual critical problems which are found there must be clarified.

Gen. 15:1-6

Intro:	After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abraham in a vision saying,	
SI:	Fear not Abram, I am your shield, your reward (is to become) exceedingly numerous.	And he said to him, I am Yahweh, who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give this land to you to possess. And he said, Adonai Yahweh, How am I to know that I shall possess it?
Lament:	And Abram said, Adonai Yahweh, what will you give me when I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eleazer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, you have given me no offspring and a slave born in my house shall be my heir.	

Sacrificial ritual prescriptions:	And he said to him, "Bring me a three year old heifer, a three year old she-goat, a three year old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon. And he took all of these, to him, cut them in two, and laid each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. When birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.
The Dream Insertion:	As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abraham and behold, a deep dark dread descended upon him, and he said to Abraham, "You may know with certainty that your descendants shall be sojourners in a land not their own, and there they will be slaves, and will be oppressed for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve and afterward they shall come forth with great wealth. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a ripe old age. And in the fourth generation they shall return here for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.
The Sign:	And when the sun had gone and darkness had come, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between those pieces.
The Oath:	On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram saying: To your descendants I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates;

Promise: And behold, the word of Yahweh came to him saying, "This man shall not be your heir but your own offspring shall be your heir."

Sign: And he took him outside and said, Look at the heavens and count the stars if you are able to count them, "And he said to him, "So your descendants will be."

And he believed in Yahweh and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.

(the land of) the Kenites, the Kennizites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Textual Problems

Vs. 1: For an explanation of the translation "become exceedingly numerous," see below under the discussion of the SI. Here it may be noted that the Peshitta reads, "I will multiply you exceedingly."

Vs. 2: The LXX omits the name Yahweh here. The phrases וּבֶן מֶשֶׁק and דַּמֶּשֶׂק אֱלִיעֶזֶר are uncertain, but as will be shown below, there is adequate reason for retaining the traditional translation.

Vs. 7: The LXX omits the name Yahweh here as in vs. 2.

Vs. 10: The phrase אִישׁ־בִּתְרוֹ probably means literally, "and he gave each his piece." (cf. Gunkel, p. 181) This is probably an old idiom which is now very obscure; it indicates the uniqueness and antiquity of this passage.

Vs. 12: The translation "deep dark dread" follows Speiser.

(1) The introduction

The introduction to B was probably omitted after it was attached to A. Now the introduction to A serves the chapter as a whole though it is clear that it belongs to A. In contrast to Type I where the narrative introduction was a very important and necessary part of the form since it described the place and occasion of the appearance, here there is no real introduction but only a phrase which serves as a transition, "After these things."[120] To this transitional phrase is joined another which is not found anywhere else in the Pentateuch: הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה אֶל־. This wording is similar to that used to introduce a prophetic speech.[121] It first comes into the Israelite traditions with regularity in the Samual material (I Sam. 15:10) and in relationship to Nathan (II Sam. 7:4). Its frequency greatly increases in the books of Kings.[122] The word comes in a particular form, however, namely in a vision (בַּמַּחֲזֶה). This is the sole occurrence of this word in Genesis. It is not found again until Num. 24:4, 16 in the formalized introduction to the prophecies of Balaam. There are no other occurrences of this exact word in the entire Old Testament.

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[120] This same phrase also occurs in 22:1 (E), 22:20 (J), 39:7 (J), 40:1 (E), 48:1 (D, following Gunkel's source analysis), but not again until Josh. 24:29; I Kg. 13:33, 21:1.

[121] e.g., Jer. 1:11, 13.

[122] I Kg. 6:11; 12:22; 13:20; 16:1, 7; 18:31; 19:9; 21:17, 28, and others.

The combination of these three elements is unique in the Old Testament. It must therefore have been composed for this particular place. Functionally, the transitional phrase is very similar to 22:1, which is also an introductory statement that is unique to Genesis. It will be shown below that this passage belongs to one of the final stages in the composition of the Pentateuch. The second element is characteristic of the Deuteronomic style and so is also of late origin. The original use of the word מַחֲזֶה in the Israelite traditions can certainly be seen in the formula in Num. 24:4, and 16. This is a standard legitimation formula which is characteristic of the seer's speech.[123] Since the traditionists who composed 15:1 undoubtedly were aware of the use of מַחֲזֶה in such formulae as Num. 24:4, 16, it was probably used here to indicate that this passage was also an oracle. A final decision about this must await the analysis of the form of the passage, however.

Though this introduction belongs more closely to A than B, the fact that B lacks any introduction means that those who joined A and B intended for this introduction to suffice for both.[124]

(2) The self-identification (SI)

The parallel structure of A and B begins here. Both actually begin with a SI. As it was shown above the SI is not the place where the name of a god is originally revealed. A primal encounter with a god is an encounter with some extraordinary power, and it is only after this experience that the god is named. The name is originally supplied by man who names the power that has encountered him. The SI is rather an oath formula which occurs upon the lips of the god himself. It presupposes that the person hearing the oath already knows the god and his name.

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[123] Dieter Vetter terms it a "Legitimatierungsformel," in Untersuchungen zum Seherspruch im Alten Testament (Dissertation, Heidelberg, 1962).

[124] Comp. Noth, ÜP, p. 29.

The form of the SI in B has already been discussed. It belongs to the general type which supplements the bare name of God with a relative clause which tells of some past action of the god. By referring to this deed of power in the past it makes the relation between the name and the power represented by the name clear. This particular SI formula also adds an infinitive clause which refers to the future action of God and in so doing makes the SI itself into a promise.

In regard to its form, the SI in A belongs to the simpler type which consists only of the first person pronoun followed by the name. The name used here is a very primitive type of divine name in that it is identical with the power it represents. The name, shield, refers to the protective power of divinity (Ps. 18:3).[125] It is known outside of Israel in an oracle of Ishtar of Arabela to Esarhaddon. The oracle which is filled with allusions to protection on the field of battle, says almost at the close, "Esarhaddon, in Arabela, my mercy is your shield."[126] Since the allusions in Ps. 13:3 are also to the field of battle, although there they are somewhat more spiritualized, it is likely that this figure originated in the primary experience of narrowly escaping death on the battle field. Perhaps it is not to be discounted that its present place in the text is after Abraham's only military exploit![127] The following phrase, "to you" (לְךָ) relates the name directly to Abraham, i.e., the protective power represented by the name is given to Abraham.

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[125] "Yahweh is my rock, and my fortress. . .my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." Ps. 18:3, and also, 31:4, Deut. 33:29 and others.

[126] ANET, p. 450.

This is made even clearer by the next phrase, "your reward shall be very great," or more literally, "your reward (is) to multiply exceedingly."[128] In favor of the literal translation which would refer specifically to the birth of children, is that in every case except two in the book of Genesis the Hiphil of רבה is used in a promise of increase or in connection with childbirth in some way.[129] If this is a reference to multiplicity of children here at the outset of this passage, the main theme of which is childbirth, then it would parallel the mentioning of the promise of land in the SI formula of B where the major theme of the passage is the promise of land.

Against this understanding of הַרְבֵּה is the view held by some that "reward" (שְׂכָרְךָ) is a military term which refers to a soldier's pay.[130] In that case הַרְבֵּה would then refer to the size of the payment Abraham could expect from his patron deity. It is not impossible, however, that the military word "reward" or "pay" may be combined here with a word which refers to the numerous posterity Abraham may expect. In view of the fact that this verb רבה is used almost exclusively in Genesis in the context of narratives dealing with posterity and childbirth and here is used in the introduction to a passage which also deals with precisely that subject, it seems very likely that the meaning intended here is that Abraham's "reward" is to be blessed with numerous posterity. The complaint which Abraham makes about the lack of an heir in response to this SI would then be understandable. The glowing promise of numerous posterity would seem to be but empty words in light of the fact that Abraham does not even have a legitimate heir.[131]

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[127] Cf. Kaiser, p. 115; Caselles, p. 329.

[128] The Samaritan Pentateuch reads, "I will multiply," buttthis is most likely a later attempt to smooth out the syntax.

[129] It is found in promises of increase in 16:10, 17:2, 17:20, 22:17, 16:4, 16:24, 28:3, 48:4, with reference to the increase of pain in childbirth in 3:16 and in other contexts only in 34:12 and 41:19.

[130] Kaiser, p. 115; Caselles, p. 328.

This SI could be very ancient. The fact that no formal name for this deity is given here, but rather a designation which refers directly to the type of manifestation of power with which the deity was associated points toward its antiquity. Kaiser's argument that this formula originated in an oracle to a king and could thus not be older than the rise of the kingship in Israel is not convincing.[132] If there is a trace of genuine history in Gen. 14[133] then it is possible that the patriarchal tribes participated in small wars from time to time, and such an oracle could well have been given to a tribal leader. Furthermore the uniqueness of the wording of this passage makes it difficult to attribute it to any particular later tradition.

What can be said about the origin of the SI in B? The reference to Ur of the Chaldeans is found elsewhere only in late P material,[134] and so this is considered to be a later correction.[135] There can be no doubt that the phrase, "this land," was understood by tradition to refer to some part of or all of the Palestinian area, thus lessening the possibility of a pre-Palestinian origin of this formula. The phrase "as a possession" is considered to be Deuteronomic[136] and thus also of late origin. Since the name Yahweh is also present here, this formula could not have originated until after the rise of the Yahwistic tribes who made a claim on the land. It thus could not be a part of an old patriarchal legend.

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[131] Here it already appears that the absolute separation which Cazelles makes between the "war text" and the "posterity text" does not hold up under closer analysis. More will be said concerning this in the analysis of vs. 2 which is central for his thesis.

[132] "Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung," p. 115.

[133] Cf. Bright, p. 84.

[134] Gen. 11:31; cf. Gunkel, p. 158.

[135] Cf. von Rad, p. 178; also, Gunkel, p. 177; Procksch, p. 108; Simpson, p. 73-74; Dillmann, p. 60.

Up until now the SI formulae in both A and B have appeared to be approximately parallel in regard to content as well as form. Both are standard types of SI formulae that define the name of God by referring to a future action of the deity on behalf of the person involved. B, of course, refers to a past action as well. A past action is also presupposed, however, by the name "shield" in A, which is based upon a prior revelation of this deity. The function which both formulae serve here is to raise the issue that is to be at stake throughout the whole of each passage, i.e., posterity and land.

There is one important variation in A which has not yet been mentioned. It begins with the phrase, "Fear not, Abram." Joachim Begrich has amply shown that this type of assurance formula (AF) is rooted in the cultic salvation oracle. This type of utterance is usually followed by the name of the one to whom it is addressed,[137] according to the standard pattern found by Begrich. The same formula has already been encountered in Gen. 26:24 (without the name), followed by the phrase, "I am with you." This phrase is also found frequently in connection with the salvation oracle[138] along with other phrases that contain the assurance of the assisting presence of

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[136] Cf. Gunkel, p. 178.

[137] "Das Priesterliche Heilsorakle," p. 239; followed by Kaiser, p. 111.

[138] Begrich, p. 219.

God. Here in 26:24 it is structurally parallel to "I am your shield" in 15:1. The causal particle כִּי in 26:24 is missing from 15:1, but the causitive relation between the AF and the SI is clearly implied there also. The primary difference between these two passages is that the SI in 26:24, "I am the God of Abraham your father," stands before the AF whereas the SI in 15:1, "I am your shield" comes after it. Thus the phrase, "I am your shield" in 15:1 parallels "I am with you" in 26:24. Both are intended to dispel fear. This shows the fundamentally close relationship between these two types of expressions. The hypostasization of the form of the presence of God in the noun "shield," however, transforms 15:1 into a SI.

The AF is used in one other appearance account in Genesis.[139] In 46:3, in an account of an appearance to Jacob at Beersheba, God says "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." Here, the specific cause of the anxiety is mentioned in connection with the AF, and to this is attached the promise of nationhood (with the particle כִּי). Just as the specific cause of anxiety was mentioned, so too is the particular place where God will be "with" Jacob. Both the AF and the phrase, "I am with you," have thus been made more specific and concrete.

It is clear then that the SI formula at the outset of this narrative, in contrast with the others, has been expanded with certain phrases taken from the cultus so that one should describe it now as a "salvation oracle." Previously, however, it has been shown that the SI is basically a modification of an oath formula, and so the question now arises concerning the relationship between the oath and an oracle such as this. There is at least one account in the Old Testament in which the language of the salvation oracle is clearly present in an oath: "And Gedaliah swore to them and their men saying, "Do not be afraid (אַל־תִירְאוּ) because of the Chaldean officials; dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."[140] Here the AF is clearly an accepted part of an informal oath, making the oath appear to be a "secularized" salvation oracle. This makes it clear that the oath and salvation oracle are closely related both with regard to form and content. There is thus no reason, from a form critical viewpoint, why an oath formula uttered by a god could not be expanded into a short salvation oracle.

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[139] It is used in other contexts in 35:17, 43:23, and 50:19, 21.

In summary it can be said that the SI formulae in Gen. 15 consist of the following elements: A—AF, SI, and promise of increase; B—SI, relative clause referring to past action, promise of land. The sequence—nominal statements followed by perfect or imperfect statements—is also characteristic of the salvation oracle.[141] Since the AF found here is also rooted in this type of oracle, it can be concluded that these SI formulae have in both cases been expanded into short salvation oracles. Each of them are small unities that are completely intelligible apart from their contexts. It is unlikely, however, that they were ever completely independent oracles. Their structure and size were rather dictated by the peculiar requirements of the larger form in which they now stand.

(3) The lament

Both salvation oracles are followed immediately by a lament. The lament in B, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" corresponds to the standard type of lament which Westermann has found in the early period of Israel's history. This early lament consists of an address, a question, and an explanatory sentence joined with a demonstrative pronoun.[142] This lament is obviously closely related to the preceding SI. The pronoun, "it" in vs. 8 refers directly to the land in vs. 7 indicating that these two verses originally belonged together.[143]

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[140] II Kings 25:24 and Jer. 40:9.

[141] Begrich, p. 222.

The structure of the lament in A (vs. 2) is approximately the same. There is an address, a question and two explanatory phrases. The phrases themselves are differently constructed. The first is connected to the question with a conjunction and consists of a first person pronoun, a participle, and a predicate adjective (וְאָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי). The participle refers specifically to the present situation and gives evidence to support and explain the question. The second phrase is very problematical since it has never been satisfactorily translated: וּבֶן־מֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי.

בֶּן־מֶשֶׁק is generally translated as "heir" though the meaning of מֶשֶׁק is actually unknown. Cazelles argues that this is taken from the Ugaritic stem mšq which means "cup bearer." He uses this to support his argument that one of the original sources of this text told of Abraham as a military men. The phrase "Damascus Eleazer" would then explain that his cup bearer was an Aramean from Damascus. The meaning of the phrase would be that he was going forth to war with his cup bearer, Eleazer. It would have nothing to do with the problem of posterity expressed in vs. 3.[144] This interpretation depends on a very unique translation of עֲרִירִי, "childless." Though the word is found in Lev. 20:20 and Jer. 22:30 with the same meaning as here, Cazelles thinks that the background of this word should be found in the Ugaritic 'wr or 'rr meaning to arouse or to enliven. The picture presented here would then be one of Abraham going forth inspired for war. The only reason that can be offered for this unique translation of עֲרִירִי, however, is Cazelles' own contention that this verse belongs to the war text and therefore contains no mention of the problem of the lack of posterity as is found in vs. 3. This is an important point in Cazelles' entire argument since if one cannot clearly assign vs. 2 to the war text and vs. 3 to the posterity text, then the thesis that there are two completely independent texts here is jeopardized. This distinction would be impossible if עֲרִירִי were translated "childless." Since the only argument which he can offer for this unique translation is his own presupposed thesis of the two texts, he is clearly arguing in a circle. There is in fact no reason to seek the meaning of this word in the Ugaritic. When this criticism is combined with the probable union of the military and posterity motifs in the SI formula described above, then Cazelles' thesis appears untenable. If it is untenable here in these very decisive verses, then it is untenable throughout the whole chapter since it is even less clear elsewhere.

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[142] FAT, p. 293.

[143] Contrary to Simpson who argues that vs. 8 originally followed 13:17 (p. 73). This is unlikely, however, for it has already been shown above that 13:14ff. was originally an old Bethel tradition which told of the gift of the land to Abraham by Yahweh through a symbolic walk through its length and breadth. Thus from a form critical viewpoint it would be entirely inappropriate for a strong lament to be uttered by Abraham immediately following such an experience. Furthermore, 15:7ff. is generally believed to be an old Shechem tradition (Procksch, p. 108) or Hebron tradition (Jepsen, p. 149; Kaiser, p. 124; Cazelles, p. 338). There is no evidence whatsoever of a connection with Bethel.

Cazelles is probably right, however, in his contention that "Damascus Eleazer" reflects an old tradition which connects Abraham with Damascus and is not a late addition to the text. Dillmann also notes that the people of Damascus in the Greek period boasted of a relationship with Abraham.[145]

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[144] "Connexions et Structure de Gen. XV," p. 329.

[145] Genesis, p. 58.

The word play evident in mešek and Dammešek could then best be explained, not as the work of a later redactor who was attempting to explain the unknown mešek, as Kaiser argues, but rather as evidence of the origin of this phrase in oral tradition where such word plays were used to aid memory. At any rate these perplexing words cannot simply be categorized as a gloss, for as Gunkel says, one can only term what one understands as a gloss.[146] About all that can be said with any degree of certainty is that it refers in some way to this son in Abraham's household. Since the preceding phrase has said that he was childless, the son referred to here must have been a slave, perhaps originally from Damascus. The reference to this slave as Abraham's heir probably is based upon a practice described in the Nuzi documents which provides for the adoption of a slave when there is no legitimate heir.[147]

This difficult vocabulary does produce one important point regarding the tradition history of this passage. From a form critical viewpoint its absolutely unique wording represents the extreme opposite of the formula which recurs many times. This makes it impossible to trace this verse with any degree of certainty back to any known redactor. The only remaining explanation is that it represents a genuine old independent tradition that antedated the major Pentateuchal traditions.[148]

In A there is a second lament. This one occurs in the form of a statement or objection rather than a question. Westermann has found this to be one of the standard forms of the lament alongside the question, in the Old

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[146] Genesis, p. 179; contrary to Simpson, p. 73; Kaiser, p. 116.

[147] von Rad, Genesis, p. 179.

[148] The least that can be said is that this passage is based on an independent tradition and is not wholly the product of one of the later known schools of traditionists.

Testament as a whole.[149] The objecting statement can occur as a second part of a lament following a question,[150] or it can occur as a completely independent form.[151] From a form critical viewpoint then, the presence of this statement following a question in the lament cannot be considered as irregular or improper. The usual argument that this represents a duplication and is therefore an indication of a parallel account from another source is thus based on an inadequate understanding of the form of a lament. Other evidence must be presented if this is to be considered a later addition.

The first part of the objection, "Behold, thou hast given me no offspring," refers back to the question, "What wilt thou give me?" That which was implicit in the question is explicit in the objection. The second part of the objection is an explanatory statement which is structurally parallel to the two explanatory statements following the question. These two laments are closely related to one another. The second bears a marked resemblance to the first in the use of the verb נתן, as well as the somewhat unusual expression בֶּן־בֵּיתִי. The more common expression לֹא...זרע could even be considered an explanation of the unusual עֲרִירִי in vs. 2. The second lament thus has nothing in it to indicate that it was ever independent of the first and can best be understood as a further explanation of it. If it is to be considered later than vs. 2, it should be understood as a clarifying supplement, the addition of which was appropriate to the form of the lament, and not as an independent parallel from another source.

(4) The promise

This final objection is answered by an assertion which directly opposes it, "This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir."

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[149] FAT, pp. 275, 293.

[150] Ps. 108:11, esp. 60:10ff.

[151] Ps. 60:2, esp. 89:38ff.

The choice of words here (use of ירשׁ) and the reference to "this man" indicates that this statement is an exact reversal of the preceding objection. It is not so directly related to the first lament. This close connection between the objection and the divine answer raises the possibility that these two verses form a unit that was inserted into this passage in the final stage of its formation.

The evidence in favor of this is as follows: (a) in B the second lament and its answer are missing; (b) the style of countering an objection or a question with another objection or question which directly opposes it is also present in the later stage of Gen. 18:1-15 (vss. 12-15); (c) vs. 3 is introduced by the phrase, "And Abraham said," which sets it somewhat apart from the foregoing; (d) two different stages of the tradition seem to be represented by the connecting phrase, "And behold, the word of Yahweh came to him," joining vss. 3 and 4 and the phrase introducing vs. 5, "And *he* brought him outside and said." The former portrays Abraham in dialogue with the "word of Yahweh," while the latter seems to presuppose the presence of Yahweh in some human form—that of a messenger or priest, etc. Would there have been a motive for adding this section? It is possible that the reference of vs. 2 was either unclear or problematical for the Yahwistic traditionists. Verse 3 would then have been added in order to make this complaint refer indirectly to one who was well-known in the later traditions, i.e., Ishmael. The fact that the story of the birth of Ishmael follows this chapter supports this view.[152] Additional evidence is also found in P material where in ch. 17:17, 18, the same type of lamenting question by Abraham is followed by the exclamation, "Oh, that Ishmael might live in thy sight!" Standing in its present context this exclamation represents a heightening and intensification of what is essentially the same objection found in 15:3, "A slave born in my house will be my heir." This exclamation indicates that now Abraham has completely given up hope that it could be any other way and is wishing that Yahweh, too, would accept the present state of affairs! This, in turn, is answered, just as in 15:4, with a strong, directly opposing assertion, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son. . . ."

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[152] That this complaint occurs before the birth of Ishmael is no problem since one of the basic literary techniques used by the compilers of Genesis is that of foreshadowing, i.e., giving an indication of the later course of events in early seminal experiences. The rigid chronological development of modern historical writing should not be required of the ancient traditionists.

Since this structurally parallel form in Gen. 17 makes the reference to Ishmael explicit, it can be assumed that at least the P writer believed that 15:3 referred to Ishmael. This interpretation likely rests upon an older more widely accepted understanding of this passage. This would mean then, that vss. 3 and 4 were added to 15:1-6 at the time when the figures of Hagar and Ishmael were being joined to Abraham—and therefore represent a later stage of the tradition than vss. 1b, 2, and 5 where Abraham is not yet joined with any other major figure.

The addition of the phrase, "And behold the word of Yahweh came to him," probably did not take place until the time of the Deuteronomist. But this does not necessarily mean that the whole passage is of late origin as Kaiser thinks.[153] Passages like this undoubtedly continued to live on independently in oral tradition. This language could have been assimilated by this unit under the influence of prophetic oral tradition. The Deuteronomist who was greatly influenced by the prophetic viewpoint could then have added them to the written manuscript at the time of the D redaction of the Pentateuch. Thus they do not provide sufficient justification for a late dating.

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[153] "Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung von Gen. 15," p. 117.

(5) The sign

The next section in both A and B begins with an imperative command to Abraham. In each case the command is an indication of the nature of the last scene of this encounter between God and Abraham. In A he is told to observe the heavens and to number the stars—if he is able. In B he is instructed to bring certain animals to be sacrificed. The numerousness of the stars of the heavens is to be a sign of the greatness of Abraham's posterity, and the covenant ceremony is to be a sign of the certainty that the descendants of Abraham will possess the land. Such signs often were given with oracular pronouncements at these ancient cultic sites.[154]

The form of A is similar to that of the promise of increase in 13:16, "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted." The somewhat laborous style of the formulation is probably an indication that this way of referring to numerousness of descendants is traditional. In 15:5 it is beautifully integrated into the narrative. Abraham is brought outside, instructed to observe the heavens, challenged to number the stars, and then after what must certainly be intended as a dramatic pause, ("Then he said to him") he is told that his descendants will be like this.

The connection of 13:16 with an old Bethel tradition is an indication that this old tradition also probably originated in an ancient cult in Palestine or Mesopotamia. If דַּמֶּשֶׂק can be translated as Damascus, then it would be Palestine. This challenge to count the stars of the heavens or the dust of the earth could reflect an ancient fascination with numbers and counting, and for this reason may be ultimately rooted in Mesopotamia where mathematics and astronomy were very highly developed even during the patriarchal era. Such figures of speech could have easily spread westward into the Canaanite cults, however.

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[154] Östborn, pp. 25f.

That this encounter with divinity is essentially a cultic event is also evidenced by the interesting introductory statement in vs. 5, "And he brought him outside. . . ." This presupposes that Abraham was either inside a temple or in a cave, i.e., probably a cultic place. If the place had been his tent, as is sometimes supposed,[155] then the encounter with the deity would more than likely have been at the door of the tent rather than inside.[156] The use of the word "outside" probably indicates that this was a temple or, what is more likely in this early time, a cave.[157] This vivid anthropomorphic language would thus appear to be a fragment of the old cultic legend which has been retained. It stands in sharp contrast with the "word of God" which seems to be the chief means of mediation in the previous verses. It would have been impossible for the later redactors to have replaced this unusual phrase with a more sophisticated theological introduction, without losing the extraordinary vividness which characterizes this last scene under the stars. If, on the other hand, this passage were originally a dream rather than a concrete cultic experience, it seems strange that there would have been such a vivid detail preserved telling of Abraham's movements. This detail does not relate in any way to the content of the divine message imparted here. The picture which seems to be implied by this passage is thus that Abraham has gone to a holy place, probably a cave, in order to lament his childlessness. There he receives an oracular promise from a holy man who is there. As a sign he takes Abraham out to view the heavens. The concrete nature of this event caused the later tradition to view this as a "vision" and to make it clear that it was the "word of Yahweh" that spoke to Abraham. The legend itself, however, contains no indication that Abraham was asleep, or that what he experienced was in any way a "vision." On the contrary, what he saw—the starry heavens—is striking in its naturalness.

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[155] von Rad, Genesis, p. 179.

[156] That the door of the tent was the place for visions of deity is indicated by 18:1ff. and by the general belief in the holiness of the threshold. One cannot presuppose here that Abraham experienced this as a dream since this is not necessarily implied by the word "vision," and even if this were true, the word occurs in a later superscription to the passage.

[157] Cf. E. A. Leslie, who describes a holy place at Gezer which has two caves, a larger one for an assembly, and a smaller 'holy of holies.' Old Testament Religion (Nashville: Abingdon, 1936), p. 34.

The parallel section in B is much more extensive and complex. It consists of the following major parts: (a) vss. 9-11, 17—instructions about a sacrifice and the divine acceptance of it: (b) 12-16—a dream which contains a promise foreshadowing all of the major events of the Hexateuch; (c) 18-21—the promise of land. Part (a) is completely unique to this narrative and probably preserves an old sacrificial rite.[158] There is no reason to think that this old sacrificial rite originally had anything to do with the making of a covenant. The original meaning of this rite had to do with the mystical union of man and god.[159] The concrete instructions about the kind of animals to be offered gives the impression that this rite was once connected with a specific cultus.[160] The strange תַנּוּר and the firebrand or torch that passed between the pieces of the animals probably refer to the rites performed by a priest in offering a sacrifice.[161] It represents the sign that the sacrifice was accepted. Now this sacrificial rite has been joined with a covenant oath and consequently has taken on added meaning. It could possibly be a sign that Yahweh has taken upon himself a kind of curse: if he does not fulfill the oath then he will meet the same fate as the animals.[162] The rite took on this meaning only when it was related to the covenant oath in the second stage of tradition.

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[158] Gunkel, "Solche Zeremonien stammen ganz gewöhnlich aus unvordenklicher Vorzeit, deren Gedanken der späteren historischen Zeit nicht mehr bekannt und nicht mehr verstandlich sind." (p. 181.); cf. also, Procksch, p. 104.

[159] Joseph P. Henniger, "Was Bedeutet die Rituelle Teilung eines Tieres in zwei Halften," Biblica, Vol. 39 (1958), p. 352; also the discussion of sacrifice in ch. I, A.

There is one further element in part (a) that requires examination.

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[160] For a comparable old tale containing a sacrificial rite, see Judg. 6:11. Keller thinks the description of this sacrificial meal goes back to an old cultic rite that was celebrated at Ophra, "Heiligtumslegenden," ZAW, Bd. 67 (1955), p. 157. This old temple legend intended to explain how the particular ceremony there originated. A similar old temple legend probably stands behind 15:7, but now it has been greatly modified by its context and separated from its original location.

[161] This description does not need to be explained as a vision of Yahweh as a fire demon (Gunkel, p. 182) or as a foreshadowing of the appearance of God at Sinai (Procksch, p. 182). Neither is its resemblance to later theophanies and its uniqueness in the patriarchal stories a sufficient reason for saying this is a foreign element that has intruded itself into this passage (Gunkel, p. 181). The simplest and most probable explanation of this verse is that it describes the ritual actions performed by a priest—the moving of the fire pot or portable oven and firebrand back and forth between the pieces of the sacrificial animal to represent the participation of the deity in the sacrificial meal. This same type of event is reported at the conclusion of the sacrificial meal offered by Gideon to the messenger of God (Judg. 6:20) and at the conclusion of that offered by Manoah and his wife to the divine messenger (Judg. 13:20). In both of these cases the fact that the sacrifice was consumed by fire was a sign that it was acknowledged and accepted by divinity. It is thus a necessary part of the sacrifice. In the present form of the story the human or divine intermediary has disappeared, and Yahweh himself seems to be present behind and in these symbols.

[162] Gunkel, p. 181.

In vs. 11 it is reported that Abraham drove the birds of prey away from the carcasses of the animals. Verses 9, 10, and 17 all concern the rites connected with the sacrifice. The names of Abraham and Yahweh are not mentioned. Here, however, Abraham appears to drive away the birds. Gunkel, sensing some incongruity here, assigns this verse to E.[163] What can be said about the relation of this verse to its context?

The first thing to be determined is whether this verse belongs to the old sacrificial rite or is a later addition. One could argue that it could be removed from its context without damaging the narrative, but this, in itself, is unconvincing as a reason for calling this a later addition. The more important question here is why would it have been added? Gunkel argues that it is a sacrificial sign,[164] but in view of the utterly negative implications it is difficult to accept that interpretation. In light of the rather bazaar nature of this event it also seems unlikely that later traditionists would have composed this verse as a way of foreshadowing the obstacles that were to stand in the way of the realization of the promise, as some have argued.

There are some grounds for believing that this verse was an element of the old sacrificial rite which forms the nucleus of this passage. It seems that an indirect reference to the concrete setting of this sacrificial rite is found here, just as such a reference to the setting of part A is found in 15:5. It is the birds of prey (הָעַיִט) mentioned here that provide an indication of the setting. These birds are seldom mentioned in the Old Testament, and where they are mentioned they are usually located on

mountain

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[163] Ibid., p. 182.

[164] Ibid.; see also, von Rad, Genesis, p. 182, who notes that the appearance of such birds is an evil omen; comp. Cazelles, p. 338 who thinks of them as symbolizing military conquest.

tops.[165] The mountain tops were also frequently the sites of altars,[166] and it is quite possible that such birds could have appeared when sacrifices were offered on the "high places." Thus vs. 11 could contain a genuine remembrance of the setting in which this sacrificial rite was practiced. From this it is possible to submit at least a conjecture as to the purpose this verse may have served in the old legend. Verse 17 implies that, even though the animals were slaughtered while the sun was still in the sky, the deity did not appear in the form of fire to accept the sacrifice until after nightfall. If such was the pattern of this sacrificial rite, then there would have been a period of time between the slaughtering of the animals and the final consummation when birds of prey could have come to attack the exposed carcasses. It would have been for just such an eventuality that the old legend included the phrase, "And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abraham drove them away," the implication being that the person then offering the sacrifice should do the same. As such this verse would then not be a sacrificial sign, but rather part of the instructions for offering a sacrifice in the fashion prescribed by this old ritual. Since this rite was practiced by tribes who bore the Abraham traditions, the name of their patriarch would have been preserved in this verse as the one who had first done this thing.

The oldest stratum of this passage would then be vss. 9, 10, 11, and 17. These verses constitute an old sacrificial rite practiced by the tribes of Abraham consisting of: (a) instructions concerning the animals to be sacrificed, (b) instructions concerning the manner in which they were to be slaughtered, (c) instructions concerning what to do if the exposed carcasses were to be attacked by birds of prey, (d) the description of the time and manner in which the sacrifice would be accepted by the deity. In keeping with the narrative form of ritual myths, these instructions are in the form of a story rather than being stated in the imperative form as such instructions were to be in the later period. The absence of the mention of any place where this rite was practiced is probably an indication that it belonged to the store of rituals and legends possessed by the descendants of Abraham and was practiced by them wherever they went.

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[165] Is. 18:6; Ezek. 39:14; other passages which mention these birds do not associate them with any particular place, Jer. 12:9; Is. 46:11.

[166] See esp. Gen. 22:2.

The second part of this narrative (b) vss. 18-21 consists of three different elements: the transition phrase, the promise, and the statement of the borders of the land and the peoples who live there. The first part of the transitional phrase, "On that day," is found elsewhere in Genesis serving to join the final element to a longer narrative (26:32; 30:35; 48:20; 33:16) as it does here. In each of these cases it is found in the J narrative framework and thus should be considered a stylistic characteristic of the later Yahwistic stage of the tradition. The second part of the transition is the important statement, "Yahweh cut a covenant with Abraham saying. . . ." This same covenantal language is an integral part of the Abimelech narratives (21:27, 32; 26:28) and the account of the covenant between Jacob and Laban (31:44), but does not occur with Yahweh as the subject of the action until the Sinai covenant (34:10, 27). The passage in Ex. 34:10, 11 is, however, structurally very similar to Gen. 15:18-21. The covenant declaration is followed by an oath in which Yahweh promises that he will "do marvels" in bringing the Israelites into possession of the land. Under the condition that the people keep his commandments, he promises to drive out a number of different peoples; all of the peoples mentioned here, except one (the Hivites) are also mentioned in Gen. 15:20, 21. This parallel structure and similarity in content raises the possibility that these passages come out of the same tradition; this is supported by the fact that both are assigned to J. The similarity between this early Genesis passage in the later Exodus passage decreases the likelihood that it could have been a part of the pre-Yahwistic level of the tradition.

This means that the rite of sacrifice described here must be separated from the concluding of the covenant. This separation is required both by religio- and traditio-historical considerations. As it was just shown, the close relationship between the structure and content of vss. 18-21 and the late Yahwistic passage in Ex. 34:11 is an indication that this Genesis passage was probably not composed until the Yahwistic period. The rite of sacrifice itself, however, is completely unique to this passage ~~and~~ thus probably has an old independent tradition behind it. That the sacrificial rite itself could have been the genuine old patriarchal tradition here, is supported by the fact that sacrifices, but not covenants, were a part of the most ancient tribal religion.

This covenant made between God and Abraham is to be distinguished from the later Sinai covenant, however, in that there are no conditions to be met by the human partner.[167] It is generally understood as a self-curse assumed by Yahweh himself.[168] This whole question of the unconditional versus the conditional covenant cannot be explored here; it is sufficient to note that this understanding of the covenant was characteristic of the covenant traditions at the Hebron cult center and later passed over into the royal Davidic covenant ideology.[169] This points to the early six tribe Hebron amphictyony as the place where the early sacrificial legend was expanded into a covenant ceremony.[170]

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[167] See George Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburg: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), p. 36.

[168] Kaiser, p. 120.

[169] "It was a dynastic unconditional, perpetual covenant theology."

The second element of (c) is the promise of land. The form of the promise was analyzed in the previous section; more can be said about the tradition history of this element after the third part of this section has been analyzed.

The third element is the statement delineating the boundaries of the land and listing the peoples who dwell in it. It is generally agreed that the boundaries represent the later ideal limits of the Davidic kingdom.[171] This type of boundary setting could not have arisen before the early days of the amphictyony and probably did not take place until the rise of the Davidic monarchy. The list of peoples is also considered a late tradition.[172] Similar lists of nations are found in later Pentateuchal traditions.[173] An earlier list is found in Gen. 10:16, but the one in ch. 15 resembles more closely the later lists.

The problem now arises concerning the extent to which this list of

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Murray Newman, The People of the Covenant (N.Y.: Abingdon, 1962), p. 149.

[170] Jepsen argues that this tradition was brought to Hebron by the Calebites when they captured this area. At that time the promise of land would have been fulfilled for them. (p. 149.) Kaiser also holds this as a possibility (p. 122) but goes ahead to say that it may have later been associated with Shechem when the center of the amphictyony was located there, and then when it was taken over by the Yahwist and used to legitimate the land claims of the Davidic kingdom its connections with the earlier cult centers were permanently severed because Jerusalem had become the place where the covenant ritual was performed. (pp. 122, 124.)

[171] Gunkel, p. 133; von Rad, Genesis, p. 183. Both think that "river" should be emmended to read "brook" in keeping with Num. 34:3, Josh. 15:4, 47, I Kings 8:65, and others. These references belong to the later Deuteronomic tradition according to Noth, US, pp. 192, 213.

[172] Gunkel, p. 183; Procksch, p. 105; von Rad, Genesis, p. 183.

[173] Ex. 3:8; Josh. 3:10; 9:1; 24:11; Deut. 7:1; 20:17, and elsewhere.

peoples may contain a reflection of the tradition history through which this passage may have passed. The list can be divided into two major parts: those tribes which are mentioned in later lists and those which are not. The tribes unique to this list are standing at the beginning of the list, with one exception (Rephaim). They are the Kenites, Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites. All of these tribes were located in the southern or eastern wilderness areas. Of particular interest are the Kenites, the first named group, who were associated with the Hebron area.[174] This could well be another indication that the tribes who bore this and other old Abraham traditions came from the Hebron area. This does not mean that the list itself was an original part of this narrative, but only that when this narrative was given its present form, a memory of its original connection with the tribes of the Hebron area would have been preserved in the particular tribes mentioned and in their arrangement in this list.[175]

The promise of land seems to be located between two elements that do not belong to the earliest level of tradition in this narrative. What can be said about the promise itself? This is a most important question since it has already been shown that it is not an original element in any of the other narratives of which it is a part, or else, that the narratives themselves are late as a whole. Standing as it is between two elements which belong to the later Israelite traditions (18a and 19f.) it is impossible to think that the promise of land, as it is formulated here, was an original part of the older Abram tradition preserved in this passage. Since it is the most closely associated with the covenant declaration in 18a, it is probable that this promise of land originated in the Hebron amphictyony where the covenant ritual was added to the older Abrahamic sacrificial rite. A logical time for this promise to have originated is the period after their first attempts to settle in southern Palestine had been unsuccessful.[176] These tribes later could have formed a coalition with the intent of regaining a foothold in this region. It is at this time that the covenantal promise of land could have become a central element in their religious life. When the northern and southern amphictyonies unified, this old promise tradition was absorbed into the whole body of Yahwistic traditions. Later the SI and lament in vss. 7 and 8 could have been reformulated to make them fit into the larger cycle of Abraham narratives.

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[174] Noth, History of Israel, p. 57. The Kenizzites were located, according to Noth, in the Negeb, p. 56; the "Kadmonites" seems to be a name which is the equivalent to the "sons of the east" (Gen. 29:1) according to Procksch, p. 105; the Rephaim which is the other tribe unique to this list, is mentioned in 14:5 and also seem to have been located in the east Jordan area according to Procksch, p. 105.

[175] It is, of course, very risky to derive historical information from these old tribal lists which can be arranged in a number of different ways. One striking fact does stand out in these lists, however. There is a tendency for one tribe or nation to stand at the first—the Hittites (Deut. 7:1; 20:17; Josh. 3:10; 9:1) and for another to stand at the end—the Jebusites (Deut. 7:1; 20:17; Josh. 3:10; 9:1; 24:11; Ex. 3:8, as well as Gen. 15:21). Since the Hittites were among the earlier inhabitants of the land and the Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem (Noth, History of Israel, p. 190) which was

So on the basis of a traditio-historical analysis it cannot be maintained that the promise of land was an original part of the patriarchal religion. It originated with Yahwism and was always associated with Yahweh. Even here in Genesis it is always Yahweh who is the most closely associated with the promise of land. It is as the result of a major act of reinterpretation by the later Yahwistic traditionists that both Yahweh and the

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one of the last Canaanite cities to be taken, it is not impossible that the sequence in which the tribes are listed reflects the order in which they were conquered by the Israelites. So, in the case of Gen. 15, the fact that the Kenites are mentioned first would be an indication that the tribes who bore this tradition made their first conquests in the southern, Hebron area where the Kenites lived.

[176] Cf. Jepsen, p. 149; also the study of the tradition history above.

promise of land are made to appear as genuine features of patriarchal religion. When Genesis asserts that Yahweh swore to give the land to the patriarchs, the hearers or readers were not so much confronted with a fact about patriarchal religion as an interpretation which maintained that patriarchal religion found its consummation in the fulfillment of the aims of the amphictyony, i.e., the conquest of the land.

The third part of this narrative, the dream in vss. 12-16 stands in a very loose connection with its context. All or most of vss. 13-16 have generally been attributed to the E source,[177] or considered to be a later addition.[178] The enslavement in Egypt is presupposed by vss. 13 and 14; vs. 16 presupposes the genealogy in Ex. 6:16ff.; vs. 15 belongs to the same late tradition as Gen. 25:8.[179] Verse 12a is usually considered to be an introduction to vs. 17 and vs. 12b a parallel which serves to introduce vs. 13.[180] Volz is correct, however, in arguing that 12b does not represent a parallel to 12a. He considers 12a to be a description of the outward situation of Abraham while 12b depicts his inner state.[181] The question is then whether vs. 12 belongs with vs. 13ff. or with vs. 17ff. There are substantial reasons for considering vss. 12-16 to be the later addition rather than vss. 13-16. First of all vs. 17 does not presuppose that Abraham is in a sleeping state. Furthermore, the symbols of the presence of god are here taken directly from the cultus rather than from the more surrealistic dream world (as, e.g., Gen. 28:10ff.; 31:12f.). The only unusual feature of this scene is the mysterious movement of the sacred objects between the pieces of the slaughtered animal. Since this was a symbol of the presence of the deity, however, it would have been inappropriate to have said that these objects were moved by some intermediary (angel or priest). This characteristic itself, does not indicate that this experience was originally a dream. The insertion in question here is thus, vss. 12-16.[182] It is difficult to determine whether this insertion was made at the same time as the addition of the promise, or later. All that can be said with any degree of certainty is that c. would not have been added before B. as a whole was brought into relationship with the whole of the Pentateuchal traditions. It therefore represents the final stage of the tradition, whereas the remainder of B. could have existed earlier as an independent unity. Section c. represents the same level of the tradition as 28:15, i.e., that which is interested in relating older individual Yahwistic traditions to the whole of Genesis.

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[177] Gunkel, p. 182; Procksch, p. 287; Noth, ÜP, p. 38.

[178] Volz, p. 33.

[179] Gunkel, pp. 182-183.

[180] Procksch, p. 108; Skinner, p. 277; Simpson, p. 74; Wellhausen, p. 21.

[181] Irrweg, p. 33.

Section A. closes with a statement that is pure, theological interpretation, "And he believed Yahweh; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness." This verse provides the climax and conclusion to A. It is addressed to the reader and tells of the inner response of faith made by Abraham. The specific wording of the second phrase, "and he reckoned. . ." (וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ) may have been partly inspired by the allusions to numbers and counting in vs. 5, since חשב can also mean to count.[183] The verb occurs only three times in Genesis and only one time with a meaning similar to that which it has here.[184] In Gen. 50:20 Joseph says, "As for you, you reckoned it as evil for me, but God reckoned it for good. . . ."

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[182] See also Dillmann, p. 62.

[183] Lev. 25:27, 50, 52.

[184] Gen. 31:15; 18:15; 50:20.

Although this statement is not addressed to the reader as is 15:6, it belongs to the same level of tradition. Both are intended to give a definitive theological interpretation to the stories that precede them and thus belong to the final stage of the tradition. Gen. 15:6 belongs to the same level as vss. 1a, 3, and 4. The word of Yahweh has called Abraham to faith.

2. Genesis 18

a. Determination of the Basic Unit

The scene to be analyzed in Gen. 18 clearly stands apart from its context as a separate unit of tradition. The chapter begins with the report of an appearance of Yahweh which has no linguistic connections with what precedes in ch. 17. The scene is concluded when, in vs. 16, it is reported that, "the men set out from there. . ." indicating that the divine visitors had departed from Mamre. The conversation between Yahweh and Abraham which follows constitutes an introduction to the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah which follows in ch. 19. Though it presupposes the appearance of the three divine messengers in 18:1-15 it is not related dramatically to the events connected with their first appearance. Verses 1-15 thus constitute an independent unit which is not closely related to either the preceding or proceeding events.[185]

This narrative is generally attributed to the J writer as a whole or to a redaction of two strands of the J tradition. If there is more than one source behind this narrative, however, they have been joined together so that they form a good literary unity. For this reason the question of the sources of the passage is best discussed when the form and tradition history of the passage is examined rather than under this heading.

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[185] Gunkel goes further to say that this saga is also completely independent from all of the other preceding promise narratives: "Unsere Sage ist demnach vollständig unabhängig von allen anderen, eine Erzählung für sich. Hier also ist noch zu erkennen, was wir für alle alten Sagen in ihrer ältesten Gestalt postulieren: Jede Sage steht für sich allein." (p. 201.)

b. General Characteristics of the Form

There are a number of similarities between this passage (henceforth to be called "C") and the two units in ch. 15: (1) the basic motif here is the childlessness of Abraham as it was in A, though here in C the emphasis falls more heavily on the promise; (2) the narrative consists of a dialogue between God and man; (3) the location of the event is uncertain as in A and B because the place is only mentioned in a later superscription.[186]

Though the similarities between these narratives are strong, there is one feature of C which clearly sets it apart from the others and requires that its form be analyzed separately. This feature is the presence of three figures (considering the divine messengers as essentially one because they act and speak as a unit in the narrative) rather than two as in A and B. God speaks first to Abraham (vss. 5, 9) and then to Sarah indirectly (vss. 10, 13) and directly (vs. 15). Abraham speaks to the divine visitors in vss. 3 and 9; Sarah addresses Yahweh indirectly in vs. 12 and directly in vs. 15. So both Sarah and Abraham are involved in a dialogue with the deity at some point in the narrative. Since the number of major figures in a narrative fundamentally affects the form, the possibility must be reckoned with that this narrative does not belong to Type II at all, or that this narrative is a combination of two originally independent units, one of which was a Type II account.

c. An Analysis of the Parts of the Form

At the outset it is necessary to examine the text and its structure.

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[186] Hölscher, p. 21; Gunkel, p. 193; Rendtorff, OG, p. 24.

Gen. 18:1-15

Introduction: And Yahweh appeared to him by the oak of Mamre; and he was sitting by the door of the tent in the heat of the day.

Appearance: And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing beside it.

Response: When he looked, he ran from the door of his tent to meet them, and he bowed to the ground and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. I will get a morsel of bread and you may refresh yourselves and afterward, since you have passed by thy servant, you may pass on. And they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and he said, "Quickly make ready three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant boy who hastened to prepare it. And he took curds and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them. And he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.

Transition: And they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

Promise: And he said, "I shall return to you in the spring, and behold, Sarah thy wife will have a son."

Lament: And Sarah heard from the door of the tent which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself saying, "After I have grown old, am I still to know pleasure? And my husband is very old."

Repetition of the Promise: And Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh saying, 'Shall I really bear a child, as old as I am?' Is anything too great for Yahweh; at the appointed time I shall return, in the spring, and Sarah shall have a son."

Sign: But Sarah lied saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And he said, "No, you did laugh."

Textual Problems:

Vs. 1: The singular "oak" should be used following the LXX, Syriac. Cf. Simpson, p. 75; Gunkel, p. 195, and Procksch.

Vs. 2: The reference of עליו is not clear here since it is obvious that if the men were standing beside Abraham he would not have to run to meet them. The most likely reference would thus be to the holy tree of Mamre where one would expect for the divine visitors to appear. This is made more likely in light of the original separation of the "tree" legend and the "tent" legend. (See below.)

Vs. 3: אֲדֹנָי should be retained because at this stage of the tradition in which this introduction was added there does not seem to be any doubt in the mind of Abraham at any point about the divine nature of his visitors. In the latter part of this chapter he converses with Yahweh without ever "discovering" his identity.

Vs. 5: Read וְאָמַר with 8 MSS, the Peshitta and LXX.

Vs. 9: LXX contains a singular here, but this is probably due to later harmonization.

Vs. 10: כָּעֵת חַיָּה means literally, "at the time of life," i.e., in the spring, as Speiser suggests; or after a period of pregnancy or a "life's interval."

(1) The Introduction

The chief characteristics which distinguish this legend from the others in Type II, is the long description of the appearance of Yahweh at the outset. In 15:1 it is simply reported that God came to Abraham in a vision. Here God "appears" as he did in the Type I narrative. This is probably the work of a later redactor, however, who was responsible for arranging all of the diverse material now found in chs. 18 and 19. The use of the term "appear," usually associated with the giving of an oath by Yahweh, is not entirely inappropriate here since a promise is given[187] but should not be considered as an original part of a narrative of this type. Further evidence of the influence of the language connected with the Type I appearance is seen in vs. 2 where it is repeated that the angels were standing "by" the tree just as Yahweh stood "by" the heavenly stairway in ch. 28:13.[188]

The chief form critical problem of this narrative is that of the relationship of this "appearance" in vss. 1-9 to the remainder of the narrative. Evidence of the problematical relationship between these two parts was found by the older commentators in the alternation of the singular and plural.

The singular is used with reference to the divine messengers in vss. 1, 3, 10, 13, 14, and 15, and the plural in vss. 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9. It is obvious that the singular predominates in the introduction, vss. 1-3, and in the dialogue about the promise in vss. 10-15, whereas the plural predominates in the description of the meal offered to the mysterious strangers in vss. 4-9. Because there is no alternation of divine names, or evidence of the E vocabulary here, most scholars view the whole narrative as a product of J.[189] Simpson attributes the alternation of the singular and plural to the imperfect adaptation of an older saga by J-1, and to J-2's elaboration.[190] This would then account for the alternation on the basis of two levels of tradition within the passages. This seems quite likely, but it may be possible to determine the nature of the older stratum of tradition more exactly with the help of form criticism than Simpson has done.

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[187] Rendtorff has uncovered a tendency always to preface a narrative where a promise of god is given with this appearance formula; cf. OG, pp. 24f.

[188] Cf. the textual study above.

Critics have long recognized that this legend corresponds at many points with other legends in the ancient world. There is at least one ancient Greek tale which corresponds almost exactly to this story. It is the story of the visit of Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes to Hyrieus, an aged peasant. This old man offers the gods a meal, and in return for it they promise him a son.[191] The chief difference between these two legends seems to be that in Gen. 18, the wife of Abraham is an active participant in the drama. This raises the possibility that Sarah is not an original part of this legend but has been joined to it in the course of the history of the tradition. There are literary and form critical reasons, as well as tradition historical grounds, for maintaining that the original form of this legend did not contain both of these figures.

From a literary critical viewpoint it is significant to note that the plural references are found primarily in vss. 4-9, the section in which Abraham is the chief character,[192] and the singular references are chiefly found in vss. 10-15, the section which is concerned primarily with Sarah. Verses 1-3 have both the singular and the plural, but this introductory section could easily be understood as the work of the narrator who joined the plural Abraham legend to the singular Sarah material.

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[189] Cf. Skinner, p. 299; Hölscher, p. 21; Wellhausen, Hexateuch, pp. 25ff.; Dillmann, p. 92; Gunkel, p. 194.

[190] Traditions, p. 75; similarly, Skinner, p. 299; Gunkel attributes it to an inconsistent reworking by a later J redactor to remove the plural references to Yahweh, pp. 194f.

[191] This is cited by Dillmann, p. 92; Gunkel, p. 200; Skinner, p. 299.

From the traditio-historical viewpoint it is also doubtful that the figures of Abraham and Sarah were unified in the earliest stages of the tradition. Because of the natural processes themselves, the association of mother and child is much more fundamental than the association of husband and wife. This would then mean that a Sarah-Isaac tradition could well have had a life in the tradition quite apart from their associations with Abraham. In that event Sarah would not have become Abraham's wife until the unification of the Abraham and Isaac traditions, thus during the early Yahwistic stage. Since it is almost certain that this legend did not originate in its entirety after the rise of Yahwism but has much older pre-Yahwistic elements in it, this clearly raises the possibility that it is composed of an older Abraham tradition that has been joined together with an equally old Sarah tradition.

This supposition is confirmed by a form analysis of the passage. First, it is precisely this extensive Abraham section telling of the three men at Mamre in vss. 4-9 that sets this narrative clearly apart from the other narratives in Type II. Furthermore, when the role of Abraham in vss. 10ff. is examined, it appears in a rather strange light. After vs. 9, Abraham, though still present in the narrative, actually plays no significant role at all. In fact, his presence there is somewhat odd since the dialogue is actually taking place between Sarah and Yahweh, though to be sure Yahweh still pretends to be speaking to Abraham. At the very outset of the dialogue in vs. 9, he has asked where Sarah was to make sure that she was within hearing distance. Sarah's location here is another unusual aspect of this whole situation. She is just inside the tent overhearing the words of Yahweh, rather than being directly in his presence. This is significant in light of the fact that in both Type I and Type II legends, only one person appears in the divine presence. Where three major figures are in the divine presence, this calls for a new form, as the analysis of Type III below will show. Here there is no evidence of a basically new form. It would rather seem that this legend is a combination of two originally independent legends. One featured Abraham as the central figure, and the other, Sarah. When Sarah became the wife of Abraham in the course of history, the two legends were skillfully fused together by placing Abraham outside the tent directly in the divine presence and Sarah inside the tent.

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[192] The mention of Sarah in vs. 6 is incidental and could easily have been added when this legend was given its final form.

Further support of this is given by Gunkel's observation that there is a tension in this story between the "tent" and the "tree." He says that originally the story took place entirely at the tent and was only secondarily connected with the tree at Mamre after the tribes settled in that region.[193] Since the legend of the "three men" and the meal is very closely associated with the holy tree at Mamre,[194] and the promise of a son given by Yahweh at the door of the tent in no way presupposes a connection with Mamre, the conclusion which suggests itself is that vss. 4-9 constitute an ancient localized Abraham-Mamre legend and vss. 10-15 an old nomadic Sarah legend. That vss. 10-15 could have originally been an independent tradition is supported by the fact that the form of this passage corresponds to that of the cultic oracle already discovered in ch. 15. Its formal structure and the way it has been modified by the redactor who joined it to the Mamre legend will now be examined.

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[193] Genesis, p. 200.

[194] Cf. Meyer, who cites Eusebius' account of the worship of three angels at Hebron and relates these to Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai who dwelt at Hebron (Judg. 1:20; Josh. 15:14; Num. 13:22), p. 263. Gunkel also finds an old legend here but thinks that the use of milk indicates a nomadic origin; this factor alone, however, is not sufficient proof of this. P. 194.

(2) The transition

The question in vs. 10a, "Where is Sarah your wife?" is very similar in form to the question of the angel in 16:8. Here it serves as a transition between the Abraham and the Sarah narratives.

(3) The oracle

The oracular promise at the outset of this section follows the same pattern as the oracle at the outset of Gen. 15:1 and 7, i.e., a statement in the first person by the deity ("I shall return to you in the spring") followed by the promise ("And, behold Sarah thy wife shall have a son"). In ch. 15 the first statement was in the form of a SI which is missing here. In its place is the enigmatic phrase, "I shall return to you in the spring" probably meant to indicate the time in which Sarah could expect the fulfillment.

(4) The lament

The hand of the one (or those) who appropriated this old tradition for Israel is particularly in evidence here in this section. Gunkel has noticed the unusually long and thoughtful explanation given in vs. 11 to fill in the necessary background for understanding the response of Sarah.[195] Such background interpretations are rare in these old narratives. It was probably thought necessary because of the highly unusual nature of Sarah's response: a laugh! This is an expression in this context of extreme skepticism concerning the truth of the oracular promise. The laugh here stands structurally parallel to the lamenting questions which Abraham raised in 15:2, 3, and 7 in response to the promises in 15:1 and 7. This response by Sarah is probably an indication that this legend in its present form is only distantly related to its cultic origin, however. A cry would have been a more typical response than a laugh in a cultic setting. That the laugh is the exact equivalent of a lamenting question such as 15:2 and 3, however, is made explicitly clear in the response of the messenger: "Why did Sarah laugh saying, 'Shall I really bear a child, as old as I am?'" as well as in the explanatory question of Sarah following her laugh. It is likely that such a question was Sarah's only response to the oracle in the original form of the legend. Now, because the narrator is interested in making this old legend refer indirectly to the name Isaac, the response of Sarah is depicted as a laugh.

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[195] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

(5) The repetition of the oracle

The structure of the response of Yahweh to Sarah's skepticisms is exactly the same as in 15:4. The doubt is referred to and then negated. The question, "Why did Sarah laugh saying. . .?" implies a negation of her doubt just as in 15:4 where the response is, "This man shall not be your heir. . . ." Then the promise is repeated so as to contradict directly the doubt: "At the appointed time I shall return in the spring and Sarah shall have a son," corresponding to the statement, ". . .your own son shall be your heir" in 15:4.

In this Yahwistic version of the tale a further question has been added as a final refutation of the doubt, "Is anything too great for Yahweh?"

(6) The sign

The sign which is given to confirm this oracular promise is of a quite unusual nature. Sarah responds to this divine chastisement directly by denying that she had laughed. Here Sarah seems to step out from behind the tent to confront the deity herself. Since the laugh had been inward rather than outward she apparently thinks that she can cover her indiscretion with an outright denial. The deity reveals his superior powers, however, in that he knows what has taken place within the mind of Sarah and so he responds by directly refuting her denial, 'He said, "No, but you did laugh." This superior knowledge here serves as a sign that this man is indeed a deity, and his words will come to pass.

This final direct exchange between Yahweh and Sarah is evidence that the entire dialogue originally took place between these two. Here it was impossible for the narrator to interpose Abraham as a mediating figure between Sarah and the deity as he did in the preceding verses. Viewed from this perspective the artificial nature of Abraham's role in vss. 10-15 becomes obvious.

Conclusion

The analysis of chs. 15 and 18:1-15 has shown that they are based upon the same type of legend. The distinguishing characteristic of this type of legend is that it contains a dialogue between man and god, the two poles of which are the lamentation by man and the oracular promise from the deity. Because the oracular promise can occur apart from the lament, as was the case in Type I legends, it is the presence of the lament which requires the categorization of these legends as a separate genre.

The setting in life where this type of legend originated was doubtless the cult, as was shown above. The SI form, the Assurance Formula, the lament, the oracular promise, the confirming sign at the conclusion, all point toward an origin in the cult. This type of legend, however, should not be viewed as the kind of legend which tells about the founding of a cult. The lament which is its distinguishing characteristic, presupposes the knowledge of the deity by the individual involved, and it probably presupposes, as well, that the individual has gone to a holy place to utter his lamentation. This contention is supported by the fact that none of these legends climaxes with the building of an altar. The purpose of Type II is thus not to tell of an initial appearance of deity but rather of a subsequent appearance at a time when there is some doubt in the mind of the worshipper about the power of this deity.[196]

The tradition history of these passages is very complex and is admittedly capable of only an approximate reconstruction. It can be divided roughly into three phases, the pre-Yahwistic (oral), the early Yahwistic (oral), and the later Yahwistic (written).

In the pre-Yahwistic stage the older material in chs. 15 and 18:1-15 was found in four separate units of tradition: the lamentation of Abraham and the promise of a son (15:1, 2, (4), and 5), a sacrificial ritual of the Abraham tribes (15:9, 10, 11, and 17), the Mamre cult legend (18:4-9), and the lamentation of Sarah with the promise of a son (18:10-15). The lamentation over the lack of fertility is a primary element in all of the religions of the ancient Near East, and it is understandable that this would also be one of the basic parts of tribal religion. These lamentation legends quite likely belong to the nomadic stage of these tribal traditions, but, as has been shown above, there was no sharp line of distinction between nomadic and localized religion since a deity always had to manifest himself in a holy place. Likewise, the sacrificial ritual is also an element in the earliest tribal religion. It was one of the chief means which man used to re-invigorate his relationship to a deity, to renew the blood tie between them.

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[196] An apparent exception to this is the appearance of the angel to Gideon in Judg. 6, but this is a later Yahwistic tradition and does not stand close enough to the pre-Yahwistic tribal religion to serve as an example of the typical use made of this type of legend.

The early Yahwistic stage of the tradition is particularly in evidence in ch. 15:7ff. Here the old sacrificial rite has been transformed into a covenant sacrifice in which Yahweh swears to give the land to Abraham. This is a concern of the tribes at the end of their nomadic period when they were attempting to establish a firm foothold in the agricultural regions. The form of this legend has been borrowed from that of the older fertility lamentation of Abraham in 15:1-6. It too begins now with a SI of Yahweh and a lamenting response from Abraham, and in the place of the sign is the appearance of Yahweh to give his oath.

It is particularly difficult to distinguish between the early and later Yahwistic stages of the tradition in Gen. 18:1-15. Since the unification of the figures of Abraham and Isaac belongs to a later phase of the tradition history of the patriarchal sagas, the unification of the Sarah lamentation with the Abraham-Mamre legend probably belongs to the later stages of saga formation in the oral traditions of Israel. The form of the saga at this stage of its development was probably taken from the standard type of legend exemplified by the story of Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes mentioned above. The extraordinary skill with which this unification has been accomplished makes it necessary to leave open the possibility that at least the final work was done in the written, rather than the oral stage of tradition. The process of unification was probably begun in oral tradition though the "finishing touches" may well have been the work of the J writer. These include the reference to Sarah in vs. 6, the transition between the two units in vs. 9, the various references to Abraham in vss. 10-14, and the explanatory insertions in vss. 10-11. In addition, the introduction in vss. 1-3 are also the work of J.

The final written stage of the tradition is also in evidence in ch. 15. Verses 12-16 were added at a later time when this chapter had been included in the larger Pentateuchal narrative. It may well have been added at the time of the unification of the E material with the J document. At this time vss. 3 and 4 were probably added to the lamentation to indirectly connect this passage with the birth of Ishmael which follows. Further later additions can be seen in the Deuteronomic prophetic phrases in 15:1, 4, and 6. These phrases along with the theological interpretation in vs. 6 were probably added under the influence of the Deuteronomic tradition at a much later time. Their presence in this passage does not, however, justify giving the whole of the passage a late date of origin.

All of these legends were probably once a part of the nexus of Abraham traditions localized at Mamre during the early Yahwistic period. It was easy for their connection with Mamre to be forgotten, however, because altar building is not an inherent part of this form. In the other narratives where it does occur, the altar serves as a witness to an oath and as a reminder of the oath in later years. In place of the building of an altar in these narratives is a sign which is not bound to a place. The stars will serve as a sign to Abraham of the certainty of the promise of descendants, and the sign connected with the covenant oath is Yahweh's appearance through the agency of a portable oven rather than in an altar. The sign in ch. 18

is the miraculous knowledge of the divine visitor and thus is not connected with a place. In ch. 18, however, the use of the old Mamre legend of the three divine visitors causes the later tradition to indicate the location of this legend in a superscription.

C. Type III: The Hearing

The form of the remaining cultic legends in Genesis is distinctly different from those of Types I and II. These passages thus require special consideration. The three passages which fall into this category are the appearance of the divine messenger to Hagar in Gen. 16 (H-2) and in ch. 21 (H-1), and the account of Abraham's trial of faith in ch. 22 (AI).

1. Determination of the Basic Textual Unit

It is obvious that the basic unit in ch. 22 extends from the introductory phrase in 22:1, "After these things God tested Abraham. . .," to the concluding phrase in 22:19, "So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. . . ." Between these two phrases lies an unbroken narrative that could be clearly understood if it were lifted completely out of its context and read as a separate story.

With H-1 the situation is not quite so clear cut. Hagar is in the wilderness with her young son who is about to die of thirst when she hears the voice of a divine messenger telling her where water is to be found. This episode in the wilderness is connected to preceding events in the family of Abraham. At the celebration of Isaac's weaning, his mother Sarah has grown jealous of Hagar's son, Ishmael, and at the request of Sarah, Abraham has cast Hagar and Ishmael out of his house with only bread and a skin of water. The transition verse, "And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba (vs. 14), connects this scene with the wilderness episode. These two episodes are not as firmly joined together as they might seem at first glance, however. To be sure, vs. 15 picks up where vs. 14b left off with the phrase, "When the water in the skin was gone. . .," but the events which follow, and the persons mentioned do not presuppose any connection with the foregoing scene in Abraham's house. They simply depict the fate of a woman who was wandering in the wilderness with her child. No mention is made of any connection of Hagar with the household of Abraham, and the events which transpire there in the wilderness form a self-contained, independent narrative unit whose meaning is in no way dependent upon anything that came before or will come afterwards. The mother despairs over the life of her child, and the deity intervenes to provide the water which saves its life. The foregoing episode provides an answer to the question of why Hagar was in the wilderness with an inadequate water supply for herself and her child, but this question is not essential to the dramatic effectiveness of this brief narrative. Its only interest is in depicting a desperate moment in the life of a mother and child. It is thus justifiable to speak of 21:15-21 as an independent unit.

The H-2 narrative, though outwardly similar in many respects to H-1, differs in that it is closely tied to the episode which precedes it. In response to the angel's question, Hagar answers, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarah" (vs. 8b), thereby intimately connecting this scene with the preceding one. The angel responds by saying, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her" (vs. 9), thus further connecting the event in this passage with the preceding situation.[197] But the scene itself is clearly set apart from the preceding events by the transition phrase, ". . .and she fled from her" (vs. 6) and from the proceeding events by the climactic naming of the well where the divine messenger appeared (vs. 14) as well as by the note added in vss. 15 and 16 that Hagar did bear Abraham a son.[198] Because it is a separate scene in regard to its dramatic form if not in regard to content, and because the seemingly parallel account in ch. 26 is an independent unit both with regard to form and content, this passage will be treated as a separate unit. The dependence of its content on the preceding narrative is, in fact, a traditio-historical rather than a form critical question and must be answered when the tradition history of the passage is traced.

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[197] Wellhausen (*Hexateuch*, pp. 19f.) followed by Smend (*Erzählung*, p. 38) and Eissfeldt (*Hex.-Syn.*, p. 24) maintains that vss. 8-10 are later additions inserted to harmonize ch. 16 with ch. 21. Holzinger (*Genesis*, p. 152) and Gunkel (*Genesis*, p. 184) followed by Skinner (*Genesis*, p. 287), Noth (*UP*, p. 38), Hölscher (*Geschichtschreibung*, p. 50), and Procksch (*Genesis*, p. 117) hold that vs. 8 is essential to the narrative. The latter position which is based on an awareness of the basic form of the

The three basic units to be analyzed are thus Gen. 22:1-19, 21:15-21, and 16:7-14.

2. General Characteristics of the Form

There are certain fundamental characteristics of this form that clearly distinguish it from the preceding cultic legends. The first and most important of these is the change in the number of persons involved. In both Types I and II there were only two figures, the patriarch and God. In Type I only God spoke. The patriarch's response was an action of some kind. In Type II both man and God spoke. Now in Type III a fundamental change occurs. In each narrative, a third party appears, the child. In AI and H-1 the child plays an important role in the dramatic action. In

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narrative, is preferable. If vs. 8 is removed the whole character of the narrative is changed. It is questionable, however, whether vs. 8 can be left without leaving vs. 9 as well. If it can be shown (see below) that vss. 8 and 9 together constitute elements of a narrative form, then it must be concluded that both must have been added at the same time. At the present it is sufficient to note that at least vs. 8 is firmly implanted in this narrative.

[198] vss. 15 and 16 are generally accepted as an addition by P: see Gunkel, p. 184; Eissfeldt, Hex.-Syn., p. 25, and others.

H-1 it is the child's cry that brings a response from the deity which saves its life. Although Hagar does not actually speak, the question by God in the narrative addressed to her provides a place for a response from her (in H-2 she does respond to the angel's question). In AI the child's question also results in divine intervention. (See below.) There is as well, a dialogue between God and Abraham. In H-2 the narrative also centers around the child in spite of the fact that the child is yet unborn. Hagar's flight presupposes her pregnancy, and God's intervention is for the sake of the child just as in the other narratives. Though the unborn child cannot participate verbally one could say that his unspoken cry for help is the presupposition of the narrative.[199] Hagar does enter into dialogue with the divine messenger. So in all three of these narratives the dialogue between man and God has been expanded to include the figure of the child. The explicit or implicit presence of this third figure fundamentally sets this form apart from the other two types. Completely new narrative possibilities and theological meanings are opened by this change. Whereas in the former types, the intervention of God was for the purpose of establishing or restoring a relationship between God and man (i.e., they deal with a "vertical" relationship), in this type God intervenes in order to affect a human relationship (i.e., "horizontal"). In each case the parent is instructed to do something which will have a direct bearing on the life of the child. The specific role which God plays in this triangular relationship will be described when each of these narratives is analyzed in detail below.

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[199] According to Wellhausen the original form of this story told of the birth of Ishmael by the well in the wilderness (Hexateuch, p. 20). In that case the cry of the newly born child could have precipitated the intervention of God. The P addition in vss. 15 and 16 does not say where Ishmael was born, clearly raising the possibility that vss. 7-14 may be a modified form of a birth narrative. There is no reason to think that such a birth narrative would have been repressed, however, if there had ever been one. On the contrary, the form of the narrative almost requires the "cry" of the child as a starting point. It is thus more likely to believe that in the absense of such a birth story this narrative arose as a substitute. This raises the possibility of its dependence on H-1 which will be discussed below.

The second general characteristic of the Type III narratives is that they are not fundamentally promise narratives as are the other two types. Westermann terms H-1 a "protection narrative" (Bewahrungserzählung),[200] and the same could be said of H-2 and AI. The focal point of these stories is not the giving of the promise but the rescue of the child. The promise is added to explain why the child's life has been saved. It represents a secondary motif though not necessarily a later addition to the form.

The general characteristics which distinguish this type of narrative from the other two types are thus that they contain three rather than two central figures and that the central event is not the giving of a promise by God to man but rather the saving of a human life by another human as a result of the intervention of God.

3. An Analysis of the Parts of the Form

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[200] FAT, p. 20.

	Gen. 22 (AI)	Gen. 21:15-21	Gen. 16:7-14
Occasion:	And after these things God tested Abraham and he said to him, "Abraham, Abraham!" and he said, "Here am I." And he said, "Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering, upon one of the heights that I will point out to you. And Abraham rose early in the morning saddled his ass, and took two of his servant boys and his son Isaac with him; and he cut wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place (מקום) in the distance. And Abraham said to his servant boys, "You stay here with the ass, and I and and the lad will go yonder and worship and then return to you." And Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac, his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. And the two of them went on together.	And when the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes and sat down a distance away from him, about the length of a bowshot; for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child."	And a malak Yahweh found her by a spring of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur.
	And Isaac spoke to Abraham, his father, and he said, "My father, " and he said "Here I am my son," and he said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" and Abraham said, "God will provide himself (with) the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And they came to the place of which God had told him, and Abraham built an altar there, prepared the wood, bound Isaac, his son, and placed him on the altar upon the wood. Then he put his hand out and took the knife to slay his son.	And she sat down a distance away from him, he lifted up his voice and wept.	

Call of God:	But a malak Yahweh called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"	And Elohim heard the voice of the boy, and the malak Elohim called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter with you Hagar?"	And he said, "Hagar, maid of Sarah, Where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarah."
Response of man:	and he said, "Here I am."		
Command of God:	And he said, "Do not put your hand on the boy and do not do anything to him	Fear not, for Elohim has heard the voice of the boy where he is, Arise, Lift up the boy, hold him with thy hand,	And the malak Yahweh said to her, "Return to your mistress and subject yourself to her."
Reason:	for now I know that you fear God (since) you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.	for, I will make him into a great nation.	And the malak Yahweh said to her, I will cause your seed to be greatly multiplied that they cannot be numbered for multitude. And the malak Yahweh said to her, "Behold you are with child and you will bear a son and call his name Ishmael, for Yahweh has given heed to your affliction. He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against all and the hand of all against him; and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.
Result:	And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, behind him, a ram was caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham took the ram and offered him as a burnt offering in place of his son.		

Conclusion:	And Abraham called the name of that place, Yahweh will provide, as it is said to this day, "On the mountain of Yahweh it shall be provided."	And Elohim was with the boy, and dwelt in the wilderness of Paran and became an expert with the bow; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.	So he called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "Thou art a god of seeing"; for she said, "Here, have I also seen after he saw me?" Therefore the well was called the well of living seeing; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.
Second Reasons:	And a malak Yahweh called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By myself, I have sworn, says Yahweh, that because of this thing ( ) which you have done, not withholding your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed, as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your seed all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."		
Second Conclusion:	And A. returned to his servant boys and they went together to Beersheba, and A dwelt in Beersheba		

Textual problems:

Gen. 22:

vs. 2: The MT reads הַמֹּרִיָּה while the Peshitta reads הָאֱמֹרִי and other less reliable versions have "visions" which is clearly an interpretation rather than a translation. Since the "land of Moriah" is unknown, various suggestions have been made as to its original reference (the connection of Moriah with Jerusalem in II Chron. 3:1 is obviously a late tradition which finds no support elsewhere). There are two possible ways of connecting Moriah with Shechem: הַמֹּרִיָּה could be variant spelling of מוֹרֶה the location of the sacred tree at Shechem or perhaps was originally חֲמֹרִים which would make the phrase read, "land of the Hamorites." Wellhausen argues that the original intention of the writer was to give the name of an area associated with the early wandering of the patriarchs and not a particular place in that area, and so he accepts the latter version as the most original, "land of the Hamorites." (Hexateuch, p. 19.) Procksch, however, finds no basis for the name "Hamorites" since the inhabitants of Shechem were called "sons of Hamor." He accepts the Peshitta's reading, אֱמֹרִי, since he agrees that the context calls for an area rather than a definite place. This does not prevent him from viewing Shechem as the place with which this legend was originally associated, however, since he thinks a connection exists between the 'mount of seeing' in vs. 14 and Samaritan Targum's reference to Gerazim at Shechem as the place of "seeing" (p. 315). Dillmann believes Shechem to be 35 hours away from Abraham's point of departure, Beersheba, and therefore too far for a three-day journey. He will accept only the general name found in the Peshitta, "land of the Amorites." The association of the name Moriah with Gerazim, he maintains, was made by the Samaritans in imitation of Jerusalem at a late date and so cannot be used to establish a connection between Moriah and the Shechem area (p. 142). Gunkel offers a quite different suggestion. He argues that the original name has been replaced by a later redactor who substituted Moriah and added the name Yahweh in vss. 14, 15, and 16. The original name he believes is Jeruel (or Jeriel) which is still reflected inthe three important phrases in the legend, יִרְאֶה אֵל, יֵרָאֶה אֵל, and יֵרָא אֵל. It is located in the region of Tocoa in the wilderness of Judah mentioned in II Chron. 20:16 (p. 240f.). This argument, however, is very hypothetical and has not won widespread support. This means that, in fact, the location of Moriah is unknown. The problem becomes even more complex when traditio-historical factors are taken into consideration such as the questionable nature of Abraham's association with Beersheba. Skinner's suggestion that the vagueness of this reference may be due to the fact that the place with which the legend was originally associated was outside of the Palestinian area seems more plausible than any of the proposed locations (p. 323). If this were the case then it is understandable that the original name might have faded from memory and been replaced by a general reference to the "land of the Amorite" and later to Jerusalem. Below, the possibility that this place was originally in the region of Seir will be discussed.

vs. 5: "Servant boys" as a translation of נער in this context seems more appropriate (cf. Speiser, p. 161, and Num. 22:22, Judg. 7:10).

vs. 13: The Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, Peshitta, Old Latin, Targum read, אֶחָד in place of אַחַר. This change adds nothing to the sense of the statement, and there is no reason to suppose that it is the more original (cf. Dillmann, p. 145). For an explanation of the translation, "where God had been," see the notes on Gen. 16:13b.

vs. 14: "Yahweh sees (or provides)," is the generally accepted translation of יְהוָה יִרְאֶה aside from some dubious changes required by a source division of this verse. This makes the phrase allude to vs. 8. Though the context indicates that this is a place, it seems to refer more to the saying which follows than to the location of a cult (Skinner, p. 330). The following phrase בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאֶה is more enigmatic. Some proposed translations are, "on the hill (where) Yahweh is seen," (Dillmann, p. 145), "on this mountain God watches," (Procksch, p. 314), "today, on this mountain, Yahweh chose," (Gunkel, p. 239). The most natural translation requiring only a small textual adjustment (בָּהָר for בְּהַר) was proposed by Skinner: "In the mount, Yahweh appears," with the MT, or "In the mount Yahweh sees," with the Peshitta and Vulgate. The MT is probably the older version in this case since it is less likely that the shift from the Qal to the Niphal would have been made by a later redactor, whereas the shift from the Niphal in the original MT to the Qal in the Peshitta might have been made to harmonize this verb form with the verb יִרְאֶה just preceding it. The appearance in the story is not of Yahweh but of his "effects," i.e., the ram caught in the thicket. There is thus some incongruity between the story and this saying, "In the mount, Yahweh appears," which indicates that it was probably not connected with this story originally but was added when the association of this story with Moriah (Jerusalem) was made (cf. Skinner, p. 331). The translation, "On the mount of Yahweh it shall be provided" (RSV) attributes a meaning to the Niphal form of this verb found in no other passage. In order to make this verb refer to vs. 8, it would be better to follow the Peshitta and let it read either, "On the mount Yahweh will provide," or more literally, "On the mount of Yahweh, he will provide." But, because of the considerations mentioned above, the MT will be followed.

Gen. 21:15-21

vs. 15: וַתַּשְׁלֵךְ literally means, "and she cast the child" (Skinner, p. 323). The sense of the statement is that she despairingly separated herself from the child and this can be best rendered, "she left the child." (cf. Speiser, p. 154.)

vs. 16: The MT reads, "and she lifted up her voice and wept," but in this case the LXX should be followed which uses the masculine form of the verb making Ishmael the subject rather than Hagar. The next phrase presupposes that some kind of utterance has come forth from the child (cf. Gunkel, p. 227; Skinner, p. 323; Simpson, p. 81; von Rad, Genesis, p. 226). Dillmann says that the MT may have been changed later because of the supposed age of the child, i.e., approximately 17 years old according to P (Gen. 16:16; 21:56) (p. 132). Speiser's argument against the LXX reading is that it would require two emendations of the text and that the word"voice" in the next verse is not "expressly connected with weeping" (p. 155). But since both of the verbs in the same phrase have the same subject, if one verb was changed then both of them would have had to be changed. Also, the word קוֹל in vs. 17 is used in vs. 16 to refer to the weeping of Hagar and is used in connection with the sound of weeping in Judg. 2:4 and I Sam.

11:4. Though it certainly does not always refer to the sound of weeping, it is clear that in contexts such as these it is customary for it to do so. Thus, neither of these reasons are sufficient for rejecting the LXX reading.

Gen. 16:7-14

vs. 13a: אֵל רֳאִי can be translated as either "a god of vision" (Skinner, p. 288), "a god of seeing" (Dillmann, p. 73; von Rad, Genesis, p. 189),"a god who appears" (Procksch, p. 115). The pointing of רֳאִי is completely unique to this passage but is probably the basic form of רֹאִי which is used before pauses. רֹאִי can mean either "seeing" (and vision) or "who sees me" (as a participial form of ראה with the first person suffix). The latter translation would be completely unique to this passage, however, whereas the former is found in I Sam. 16:12, Jb. 33:21 (מֵרֹאִי) and Nahum 3:6 (כְּרֹאִי). The specific translations in each of these passages is not "seeing" but refers in various ways to the part of man that one sees, i.e., his outward appearance. The use of the word in Job 7:8 is obscure, but should probably read, "the perceiving eye shall see me no more," i.e., the eye which sees the outward appearance. This construction עֵין רֹאִי is very similar to עַיִן רֹאָה in Prov. 20:12; this establishes a precedent for the concept of the "seeing eye" if not for the exact grammatical construction. Furthermore, the translation, "perceiving eye" (or eye of perceiving, literally), is more natural than "the eye of him who sees me" which is widely used and fits better into the context. Job is comparing his disappearance from life with the vanishing of a cloud thus alluding to the ephemeral nature of his bodily existence. (Also suggested by Dillmann, "no eye of seeing, sees me again," Book of Job, I (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866), p. 122.) So, if רֳאִי were to be translated here as "who sees me" the meaning would be unique to this passage. The most likely translation of רֳאִי would then be "god of seeing" or "god of appearance."

vs. 13b; This is an even more difficult verse. The most widely accepted translation, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?" which stems originally from Wellhausen requires that the text be emended too extensively. Dillmann more correctly offers the straightforward translation, "Have I here also (in the desert, where I could not expect such a thing) looked after him who saw me." By this he means that, "She did not see Him, but as he departed she observed that the all-seeing God was present there, in the person of His angel, and she looked after Him." As support for this interpretation he cites Ex. 23:23 (p. 73). There one finds וְרָאִיתָ אֶת־אֲחֹרָי, "and you shall see my back." Moses here is told that he will not be permitted to see the face of Yahweh, but only אֲחֹרָי i.e., the outward manifestation of his glory, or the "effect" of his presence on the visible world. One might also think in this connection of the vision of Isaiah in the temple which tells that the "train" of Yahweh filled the temple implying that Yahweh is actually facing the other direction, or at least that only the trailing edge of his glory was visible to the prophet (Is. 6:1). One does not see God directly, but as in Ex. 33, only what he leaves behind. The use of the term אחר with ראה in both Ex. 33 and Gen. 16:13b certainly seems to be more than coincidence in light of the uniqueness and obscurity of both phrases. This lends considerable weight to Dillmann's contention that "looked after" refers to Hagar's vision, not of God, but of his, one might say, "after-effects."

(See also Johannes Lindblom, "Have I really here seen the back of him who has seen me?" "Theophanies, in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 32 (1961), p. 103, note 21.) In this light it is especially striking that אַחַר is also found with רָאָה in one other passage in Genesis which tells of a similar vision, Gen. 22:13. There one finds וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה אַיִל אַחַר. Now the meaning of the word אחר in this disputed passage may possibly be determined. This phrase immediately follows the command by God for Abraham to desist from slaying his son. He lifts his eyes, and rather than seeing God, which one might well expect to do after hearing his voice, he sees what he left behind him: a ram, caught in a thicket which can be used for the sacrifice. אַחַר here then, as אֲחֹרָי in Ex. 33:23 and אַחֲרֵי in Gen. 16:13 refers to the effects of God's presence, or what God leaves behind him after he has departed. God has left behind the ram thereby "providing" for his sacrifice as Abraham said in vs. 8. In Gen. 16:13, as it stands, the effect of God was the messenger sent to Hagar; but more than likely, this phrase belonged originally to an earlier form of the legend in Gen. 21:15ff. as will be shown below, and thus referred to the perception of the well by Hagar.

While Dillmann's interpretation of 16:13b can be accepted, there is some question about the translation of רֹאִי. As it was shown above, "who sees me" would be a translation that is unique to this one passage. More than likely it should read, literally, "an after-view" or "after-vision." This would make the phrase אַחֲרֵי רֹאִי a term which refers to the sight of the effects of the divine presence. A liberal translation would then read, "Even here, I have seen (the)effects of an appearance (of God)." Gunkel's translation approaches this: "Truly in this place I have seen the (fortunate) end" (emending אַחֲרֵי to read אַחֲרִית). The "end" here refers to the end of Hagar's need which was caused by divine intervention (p. 190). This, however, requires an unnecessary textual emendation.

vs. 14; בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי has been variously translated as, "the well of the Living One who sees me," (Dillmann, p. 73; Holzinger, p. 152; Gunkel, p. 190; Skinner, p. 288), "the well of living seeing" (Procksch, p. 115), "the well of the living sight (Speiser, p. 118), and "the well of he who sees me lives" (Wellhausen, Prolegomena, p. 326). Von Gall's solution is to divide it into two names, עֵין רֹאִי from J and בְּאֵר לַחַי from E. The latter supposedly lies behind Judg. 15:9-19, and was originally the sight of 21:15ff. The original J version had עֵין רֹאִי in correspondence with the use of עַיִן in 16:7. The JE redactor then combined these two names omitting עַיִן (Freiherrn von Gall, Altisraelitische Kultstätten (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1898), pp. 40f.). There is, however, no direct evidence for the existence of either of these places, and it is improbable that a source redactor would tamper with place names since such names are fixed by tradition. Since the translations, "the Living One who sees me" and "he lives who sees me" depends upon the translation of רֹאִי which has been shown to be unlikely above, the better translation would be "the well of (the) living sight." (Speiser). But, contrary to Speiser, the reference would not be to the fact that Hagar lived after seeing God, but rather to the life given her child because of the "sight."

The outline shows that these narratives, with some allowance for individual variation, consist of three basic parts: I. the description of the occasion, II. the call of God and the response of man, III. the act of God and the response of man. Now each of these parts will be examined in order to clarify the basic similarities that exist between the narratives of this type and to explain the nature of their individual differences.

a. The Occasion

The concrete setting of all three of these narratives is either stated in the first section or presupposed. In H-1 the location is not mentioned since it has already been stated in 21:14b: "the wilderness of Beersheba." In H-2 the location is described as, "by a spring of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur." The situation in A-I is somewhat different in that the occasion has been expanded to include a description of what took place before Abraham went to the place where the central action of the narrative occurs. This place is mentioned, however, when God instructs him to go to "the land of Moriah." Further, this introductory section presupposes that Abraham is living at Beersheba when he is commanded to go to this mysterious place. (21:33, 22:19)

One striking similarity at this point in all three of these narratives is that the name of the specific place is avoided. Instead, the name of a general area, a wilderness area or even a "land" is given. This is necessary because the name of the place is directly connected with the action of God that is to occur in the narrative, and to state the name at the beginning would reveal the outcome. It is less likely that the concern of this ancient narrator is a historical one, i.e., that he intends to imply that the place was not named until Hagar or Abraham named it at the conclusion of the narrative. It is especially clear that the "place" (מקום)

in AI was a cult site long before Abraham went there[201] and thus would already have been named. The concern of the narrator is simply to tell that the father of the race, Abraham, encountered divinity there, consequently causing this cult site to play a meaningful role in the early history of the people.

One further remarkable similarity about these geographical references is that they are all in the same general area as nearly as can be determined. H-1 reports that Hagar is wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba. This probably refers to the southern part of the Negeb "from Beersheba to beyond Qadesh."[202] Because it is reported in 21:21 that Ishmael ". . .lived in the wilderness of Paran" which is located south of Kadesh and east of the Arabah,[203] it is more likely that Hagar's wanderings led her beyond Kadesh. H-2 locates Hagar's encounter with the divine messenger at a spring in the wilderness on the way to Shur, i.e., Egypt.[204] The name of this spring indicated in 16:14 is Beerlahairoi and its more exact location is "between Kadesh and Bered." Bered is believed to be a mountain south of Kadesh, but its exact location is unknown.[205] The well, Lahai-Roi, which is called עֵין הַמַּיִם, in vs. 7, has been identified with a spring by the same name called bijār mājīn, located about 20 kilometers SSE of Kadesh.[206] So the geographical setting of both H-1 and H-2 is in the same area, the wilderness south of Kadesh.[207]

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[201] Holzinger, p. 137; Gunkel, p. 237. It thus cannot be conceded to Gunkel that the indirect reference to the specific place in the phrases, "which I will point out to you," or "of which God had told him," was due to the fact that the name of the place had been deliberately left out by later redactors because it was no longer appropriate (p. 237). The narrative art itself required that the name be withheld until the end.

[202] S. J. Simons, The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament (Leiden; E. J. Brill, 1959), par. 61.

[203] Ibid., par. 432, and Map VI, IV, e,f,g,h.

[204] More specifically it refers to the "wall" (Shur) which formed the eastern boundary of Egypt. This "wall" was probably a string of fortifications on the isthmus of Suez. (Ibid., par. 684.)

[205] Ibid., par. 368.

The situation is more problematical with AI. Both the "land of Moriah" and the place named in vs. 14, "Yahweh Yireh," are unknown. As shown above, the most likely possibility is that the original location of Moriah was unacceptable to later writers because it lay outside of the land of Palestine. All of the cultic legends associated with Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, were related to sites in Palestine, and it would have been impossible for the later tradition to have allowed the site of this very significant event to remain in another land. But is it possible to say where this might have been? No indication is given of the direction of the three-day journey Abraham is supposed to have taken, but there is no reason to think of it as being northward any more than southward since the connection with the Shechem area is purely hypothetical, and the reference to the land of the Amorites in the Peshitta is a late tradition and too general to have any meaning. There is, however, some evidence that this location may have been in the south. As it will be shown below, this legend was originally associated with Isaac and had nothing to do with Abraham. Isaac is not only related to Beersheba, but also to Beer-Lahai-Roi (Gen. 24:62, 25:11). These references to Isaac at Beer-Lahai-Roi are interesting because both of them show an independence of the figure of Isaac from Abraham. Abraham is strangely missing from the story in 24:62ff. telling of the return of his servant with Rebecca and of the meeting of Isaac with his betrothed at Beer-Lahai-Roi.[208] It is then reported that after Abraham's death Isaac dwelt at Beer-Lahai-Roi (25:11). There are thus some grounds for speaking of an independent Isaac tradition associated with Beer-Lahai-Roi. But can this be the original location of Gen. 22? It seems to be basically unsuitable because it is a well, whereas the event recorded in Gen. 22 seems to be on the top of a mountain. Though it might be argued that all of the references to the mountain in this narrative belong to the later redaction (vss. 2b, 14b) which added the name "Moriah," it is more prudent to assume that the tradition has preserved this element accurately. Not far from Beer-Lahai-Roi, however, are the mountains of Seir, west of the Arabah. This is country that was eventually to come under the control of the hated enemies of the Jews, the Edomites.[209] If the original site of the Isaac legend had been in the mountains of Seir, then it would be quite understandable that later tradition would have suppressed it. Certainly, no firm conclusions can be reached on this matter with so little evidence, but in the absence of better alternatives it seems possible that the original location of Gen. 22 was either at Beer-Lahai-Roi, or better, at one of the mountains east of there in the region of Seir.

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[206] Ibid., par. 367, and Map IIc, XXIII, D.

[207] It is not necessary to draw the conclusion from the reference to the wilderness of Beersheba in 21:15, that Abraham was not living at Beersheba but near it (Skinner, p. 323; Gunkel, p. 230). This simply gives the direction of Hagar's wanderings after leaving Abraham. In view of the fact that the Hagar traditions were originally independent of the figure of Abraham it would have been in the interest of the narrator to use a designation which would allow this Hagar legend to remain in the southern Paran region and still connect it with Abraham at Beersheba.

This means that corresponding to the similarity of form in these legends, there is a similarity of geographical origin. This considerably increases the possibility that these legends constitute a genuine old genre of cultic legends.

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[208] Following Skinner, p. 347, Dillmann, pp. 170f. The language in this verse is somewhat unclear and it has been argued that Isaac has been secondarily associated with Beer-Lahai-Roi, the Ishmaelite cultic center (cf. Meyer, Nachbarstämme, p. 253; Gunkel, p. 259). This is less likely, however, than Dillmann's suggestion that a later writer may have tampered with this verse in order to make it seem that Isaac was coming from this location to one more suitable in Palestine such as Mamre (p. 171).

[209] Deut. 2:5f.; also Simons, par. 434.

The second common characteristic of the occasion is that there is no true "appearance" of God as in Types I and II. Either a voice speaks "from heaven," or it simply states that a "messenger (angel) of Yahweh found" Hagar. The only other occurrence of this word "find" (מצא) with "messenger" (מלאךְ) as the subject is in Job 33:23, 24. There in the speech of Elihu man is portrayed in a desperate situation, and the angel is one who can serve as a mediator, one who can "find" a ransom for his soul. An angel's "finding" activity is thus connected with his role as a redeemer or saviour. In the Job passage he "finds" what is needed to redeem a man, whereas in Gen. 16 he finds the person with the intention of saving her and her child. Another function of the angel in the Job passage is to "declare to man what is right." This also is related to the role played by the angel in Gen. 16 in telling Hagar to return to Abraham's household. Similar commands to stop or change certain actions are given in AI and H-1. The background for the figure of the angel in these passages is not to be found in the appearance mythology of Canaanite cultic sites such as in Gen. 18 but in the nexus of ideas concerning the mediating and redeeming role of the divine messenger. In regard to this role of an angel Fohrer writes, "He shows man the possible and necessary way to return in order to redeem him."[210]

The third common characteristic of the occasion is the most obvious: it presents the characters in their desperate situation. In each case a parent is facing the death of his child. To be sure, in H-2 this is not explicit, but one could say at least, that the child if he survived faced a bleak future. H-2 is so closely tied to the preceding scene that the occasion has been abbreviated. The dramatic situation is bound inseparably with the preceding dispute between Hagar and Sarah, and no attempt is made to insert any new dramatic elements. Thus the occasion of H-2 does not require any further consideration.

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[210] George Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob (Gütersloh: Mohn & Co., 1963), p. 460.

The occasion of H-1 establishes a dramatic tension that is quite independent of the preceding scene. This tension is created through three actions. First Hagar leaves her child by the bush in despair and goes a short distance away and sits down to await its death. Hagar's movement away from the child conveys her feeling of utter hopelessness; there is nothing more that she can do. In one sentence the narrator has created a deeply tragic situation that is in no way dependent upon what comes before. The second action is verbal: she laments, "Let me not look on the death of the child." This utterance is more than a simple technique for increasing the emotional tension of the story. It plays a very definite role in the movement of the drama. Job, in asserting his innocence says, ". . .if I have seen any one perish for lack of clothing, or a poor man without covering." The presupposition of this statement is that to look upon suffering is also to be responsible for doing something about it. This type of "sight" plays an important role in legal procedure. Seeing or investigating is the first step by the respohsible party in rectifying a wrong or in punishing an evil doer. This is clearly seen in Gen. 18:20, Ex. 2:24, and 3:7 where "hearing" and "seeing" lead to the knowledge of the situation and consequently to either the destruction or salvation of the parties being investigated. This meaning of seeing corresponds to what Boman believes to be the essential meaning of thinking among the Hebrews: "The other expressions for the function of thinking (Yadhaʿ—'know', raʾah—'see', shamaʿ—'hear') likewise have the purpose of finding a point rather than furnishing a proof."[211] Thus seeing is essentially investigating. But with the investigation comes also the responsibility for action. Hagar's plea to be delivered from the sight of her dying child is thus a plea to be absolved of the responsibility for its death. This lament is presumably directed to God and has the effect of shifting the responsibility for the death of the child to God. Now only God can save the child.

The third action is also verbal, or more precisely, vocal: the child's cry, ". . .and he lifted up his voice (קוֹלָה) and wept (וַתֵּבְךְּ)." The context in which this phrase should be interpreted is also that of the legal procedure. According to Boecker, the legal procedure is set in motion by the cry of the injured person. The terminus technicus for this cry is צעק .[212] Though this term is not used here, it is clear that the phrase, "and (he) lifted up (his) voice and wept" performs a similar function in numerous accounts.[213] Thus, in this context the cry of the child is more than a narrative embellishment; it is the means whereby the child's plight is brought to the attention of a higher authority which is, in this case, God.

The occasion in AI is considerably longer and more complex than in the other two narratives because it must introduce a completely independent narrative. Whereas in the other narratives there is only one dialogue, in

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[211] Thorlief Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek, trans. by J. L. Moreau (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 204.

[212] Hans J. Boecker, Redeformen des Rechtsleben im Alten Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), p. 62.

[213] When the men of Israel come to Mizpah to inquire into what legal means can be taken to procure wives for the Benjaminites, the account begins with the phrase, "and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly." (Judg. 21:2). In other passages it is used to describe the response of the people to bad news (Judg. 2:4; Num. 14:1; I Sam. 11:4; II Sam. 13:36). In each case it is a form of protest against a given state of affairs.

AI there are three. Two of these are in the occasion and play important roles there. The first dialogue between God and Abraham serves to set up the dramatic situation which will be resolved in the course of the narrative. Abraham is commanded to take his son to the top of a mountain and offer him there as a sacrifice. Lest the reader be overly shocked by such a command, the narrator prefaces this dialogue with the comment that this is a test (נסה) God is making of Abraham. Since this word provides the context in which the narrator wants the reader to interpret the whole of this story, the meaning of this word must be examined.

The word נסה is similar in meaning to the word ראה in that both are concerned with establishing a point, i.e., with investigation. But investigation by means of seeing is confined to the examination of the outer appearance of a situation, whereas investigation through testing is capable of bringing to light the hidden situation within the heart of a man (Deut. 8:2). This word is frequently used in non-judicial context,[214] but it is essentially a type of elementary judicial procedure which has as its goal, the gathering of evidence to be used in determining a verdict. This can be seen in the close relationship of this verb with the name, Massah. This name occurs with "Meribah" as a designation for the cult center at Kadesh. This cult center was known as a place where judicial proceedings took place.[215] This is reflected in one of the names by which it may be called, "Spring of Judgment" (Gen. 14:7, עין משפט). The name Meribah also refers to the legal proceedings which took place there since it comes from the word ריב which is the terminus technicus for a judicial altercation in the Old Testament.[216] It is clear that the parallel name, Massah which is taken from the verb נסה also refers to a type of judicial procedure at Kadesh. So, when this verb occurs at the beginning of the AI narrative it is an indication that the action which is to follow has some affinity with a type of judicial procedure.

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[214] Judg. 6:39; Eccl. 2:1n, 7:23; I Kg. 10:1; Ex. 15:25, 20:20; Deut. 8:16, 13:3(4), and elsewhere.

[215] Cf. von Gall, p. 32; Newman, p. 73; Oesterley and Robinson, p. 35.

When God tests Abraham he thus intends to probe the inner recesses of Abraham's heart to bring to light the evidence of his faith in God. It is important to realize at the outset that this test is a personal matter between Abraham and God, and that the third figure in this narrative, Isaac, necessarily stands in a problematical relationship to the essentially private nature of this test. Sharp tensions exist between the sphere of Abraham's private relation to God and his public relation to his son; in addition to that is the problem of God's relation to Isaac. Such strange tensions have not existed in the other two narratives of this type, making it highly probable that this narrative represents the fusion of two quite different motifs: the testing of Abraham's faith in the word of promise and the miraculous redemption of Isaac. The former motif is the latest since it belongs to the period after the development of the promise-fulfillment scheme.

Unfortunately, complete accounts of the testing procedure are almost totally missing from the Old Testament, and so a comparative study of the language of this passage with that in other tests is scarcely possible. There is one passage, however, which is also related to the test or trial that may shed some light on part of this passage. In Judg. 7:4ff. Yahweh commands Gideon to reduce the number of his army by taking them down to the water where a test (צרף) may be performed. To be sure, the word for test here is not the standard term, נסה ,[217] but the procedure which follows is certainly related to the regular testing procedure. The first part of the passage consists of instructions given to Gideon: And Yahweh said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; take them down to the water and I will test them for you there; and he of whom I say to you, 'This man shall go with you,' shall go with you; and any of whom I say to you, 'This man shall not go with you,' shall not go." Two remarkable similarities between this narrative and Gen. 22:2 are that the instructions for the "test" are given in advance and that the specific nature of the test is not disclosed in the instructions. In Judg.7 Yahweh says that he will tell Gideon which men he should choose and which he should leave, but he does not say what the criteria will be for making this choice. He only says that it will be done at the water, which as Kadesh illustrates was a customary place for testing. The reason for this reluctance to reveal the criteria is probably due to the fact that originally the action of the water itself was the determining factor. In some places the belief was that if an unholy person drank sacred water he would die.[218] Here, however, it is not the water which decides who will fight, but the way the men come to drink the water. Further instructions concerning this are given in 7:5, but they are not given until Gideon has brought his army down to the water. In Gen. 22:2 this same type of indirect reference is found. Yahweh says, ". . .offer him there. . .upon one of the heights *that I will point out to you*." (also similarly in vss. 3 and 9.) Gunkel suggests that there is a gap between vs. 2 and vs. 3 in which the name of the place was given but has now been omitted because it was inappropriate.[219] This supposition does not seem to be necessary in light of the form of this narrative. The indirect reference to the name of the specific place of sacrifice is necessary, not because the place had not yet been named or because the name had been repressed, but because the name of the place provided an indication of the outcome of the test, and as in the Gideon passage, the outcome could not be known before actually going to the place of trial. But here again the discontinuity can be sensed between the motif of the trial and what actually takes place on the mountain. Outwardly the central event on the mountain has nothing to do with the resolution of a test; it tells of the miraculous rescue of Isaac. The resolution of the test was an inward occurrence. Because Abraham was inwardly willing to play the role assigned him in this drama to the very end, he finds that the decisive requirement of this test is faith and not the murderous deed. The name, "Yahweh will provide," outwardly refers to the substitution of the animal sacrifice for Isaac, but inwardly resolves Abraham's test. He learns that what is required of him is absolute faith in God's ability to fulfill his promises beyond the sacrifice of all human certainty.

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[216] Ex. 23:2, 3, 6; Deut. 21:5; II Sam. 15:2, 4; Hos. 4:1, 12:3; Mic. 6:2; Ez. 44:24.

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[217] The meaning of this term is usually to "refine," but see Ps. 105: 19, 18:30.

[218] Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 180.

The motif and style of 22:2 is not entirely unique in the book of Genesis. In 12:1f. Abraham is also commanded to do a difficult thing. He must leave home and family and go to an uncertain destination that will only be shown to him in the future (". . .which I will show to you"). The striking similarity between these two passages has been noticed before,[220] and some have argued that the whole of Gen. 22 comes from the same writer as 12:1ff.[221] This position has not won widespread support, but the similarity between these two passages does indicate that the traditions out of which they came are not as widely separated as some have thought.

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[219] Genesis, p. 237.

[220] Gunkel, p. 236.

[221] Volz and Rudolph, pp. 14ff.

This section of the occasion in AI is a narrative which tells of Abraham's movements from his departure[222] to his arrival at the mountain (vss. 3-6). The recounting of Abraham's preparations for the journey and of his arrival is skillfully used by the narrator to heighten the tension of the drama.

Following this narrative section is the second dialogue, this time between Abraham and Isaac (vss. 7 and 8). This dialogue stands parallel to the lament of Hagar and cry of Ishmael in H-1. The function of this dialogue is also the same as that of the parallel elements in the other narrative. Both Abraham and Isaac give expression to their anxiety about the situation they are facing. The use of the dialogue for this purpose is possible because the narrator presents Isaac as a young boy rather than a mere babe. His advanced age emphasizes the importance of his role in this narrative. The perceptive question indicates his complete comprehension of the rite his father is about to perform. Through this question his plight is indirectly brought into the open in a way which is at least structurally parallel to the cry of Ishmael. Of course, he cannot express an awareness of exactly what lies before him since such a thought would have been inconceivable for any son. Yet it is precisely through this question which cannot be the true question, that the unimaginable injustice of this deed is appropriately expressed. It is in this way that Isaac makes his plea for justice. Now it is Abraham who must answer the question; but it is impossible for Abraham to answer it. An honest answer would have been as hard for Abraham to give as the true question was for Isaac to conceive. Since Abraham knew that this was God's doing and not his own, he, as it were, referred the question to God with his statement, "God will provide. . .," i.e., God must answer the question for I cannot. In this way Abraham shifts the responsibility for this deed from himself to God just as Hagar had sought to do with her lament, "Let me not look on the death of the child." Abraham's statement also is an indication that he has resigned himself to do the bidding of God. Now it is clear that Isaac will in fact be sacrificed unless God intervenes to provide another sacrificial victim. The question is no longer what will Abraham do, but what will God do?

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[222] Gunkel, p. 236.

At the outset this narrative was concerned with the two-way God-man relationship, but after the question of Isaac the relational structure has shifted to that of a three-way, Man-God-Man relationship. But the tragedy of the situation is that the second man has been drawn into an affair that belonged within the sphere of the God-Man relationship and made the sacrificial victim of it. When Abraham acquiesced to this sacrifice the demands of the God-Man relationship were satisfied. The man-to-man relationship of the parent and child was shown to be of less importance than the God-man relationship, but still very much unresolved was the question of God's relationship to the other man. Is he to be a sacrificial victim to the father's God? It is this question that exposes the central importance of the figure of Isaac in the latter part of this narrative.

b. The Call of God

At this point in each of the legends, God, or more specifically the divine messenger, speaks. In H-2 this is introduced by only the simple narrative connection, "and he said." Important introductory phrases occur, however, in AI and H-1. Both have the phrase, "and a malak Elohim (Yahweh) called to X from heaven." But just prior to this H-1 has, as an explanatory note, the phrase, "And Elohim heard the voice of the boy." This provides the reason for the intervention of God on behalf of Ishmael. When God is the hearer of the cries of the oppressed he is acting in the role of a judge. This comes to light very clearly in the oath formula, "Yahweh shall be hearer between us."[223] as well as in a number of other passages.[224] He has heard the lament of Hagar and the cry of Ishmael, and he has assumed the responsibility for intervening in the case and rectifying the situation.

In light of the parallel structure of these narratives one can also say that the intervention of God in AI was in response to the implicit plea that was behind the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac in vss. 7 and 8. In H-2 the plea is not found in the narrative itself but in the preceding scene when Sarah cries, "May Yahweh judge between you and me." To be sure, in this case, he judges against Hagar rather than for her.

The phrase, "and Elohim (Yahweh) called to X from heaven," found in AI and H-1 is unique to these passages. Because of its verbatim repetition in the manner of a formula it can be assumed that it has a very definite function in these narratives. The function of the calling (קרא) of God is made clear in Job 13:20ff. Job is pleading with God for an opportunity to argue his case (מִשְׁפָּט), to contend (יָרִיב) with someone about his righteousness in order to vindicate himself. The plea reaches its high point in vs. 20 where Job asks for two things: (1) that God "withdraw his hand" from him thereby easing the frightful state of his life, and (2) "Then call (קְרָא), and I will answer; or let me speak and do thou reply to me." Boecker cites this as an example of how a judicial procedure can be started by either the accuser or the accused.[225] The call of God here is thus understood as an initiatory act in a judicial procedure.[226] This is clearly the larger context out of which the call of God in these Genesis passages should be interpreted.

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[223] Judg. 11:10; cf. Karl Budde, who terms it an "Schwurformel," *Das Buch der Richter* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1897), p. 83; also Pedersen, *Eid*, p. 160.

[224] Gen. 30:6, 18:20; II Sam. 15:3; Deut. 1:17.

The close relationship between the type of dialogue that follows and a very simple type of judicial procedure can be seen when it is compared with an example of such a procedure as I Sam. 22:11 and 12. This passage tells how Saul assembles Abimelech and all of the priests of Nob to question them about collaborating with David. He begins by summoning the person by name, "Hear now, son of Ahitub." And he answers, "Here am I, my Lord (הִנְנִי אֲדֹנִי). He then begins to question him, and after being convinced of his guilt issues his verdict and commands for him to be executed. The elements here of summons, response, question, verdict, and command provide the larger framework for understanding the elements of the dialogue in the Genesis passages. In AI the formal summons is by name. This is followed by the response (הִנֵּנִי), and the command. The element of the inquiry is not needed here since God has already found out what he wanted to know about Abraham's obedience. The verdict is missing because this is not a judicial proceeding in the full sense of that word, but only a form that is based on that procedure. In H-1 and H-2 the elements of the name and the inquiry have been combined making this a less formal type of dialogue.[227] Though the two questions in these passages are far from those of a formal legal inquiry, they do imply that the person addressed is in the wrong. Hagar is not going in the right direction in H-2, and in H-1 she should not be troubled over the child since God has heard his cry. Hagar responds to the question in H-1, but a response is not necessary in H-2 since the cause of her difficulty is self-evident.

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[225] Redeformen, p. 58, note 1.

[226] See also Ps. 50:1 where God calls the heavens and earth together for a grandiose judgment scene. Other related occurrences are: Gen. 3:9, Ex. 3:4, 19:3, 24:16, 31:2, I Sm. 3:5. Used also in connection with naming in the creation (e.g., Gen. 1:5) but that is clearly not the context here.

[227] Direct precedent for this may well be found in what Boecker terms

Following the response is the command of God which in each case either halts the action (AI) or reverses it (H-1, H-2). Abraham is commanded to stop his murderous action; Hagar in Gen. 16 is instructed to return to Sarah and be submissive to her, and in Gen. 21 she is enjoined not to fear but to arise and go back and pick the child up. There is no place for a verdict in this type of narrative since the central question is not the guilt or innocence of the persons involved, but rather the rectification of a desperate situation. This is done by God through these commands.

As is often the case with a verdict, however, a reason is given for the action God has commanded. In AI and H-1 the reason is joined by making the causative connection explicit. In H-1 and H-2 the reason given is a promise. In H-1 the promise is that Ishmael shall become a "great nation." In H-2 a series of declarations are made which are only very loosely joined to the preceding command; first is the promise of increase which is also closely related to the Isaac tradition; second is the announcement of the birth of a son and the etymology of his name; third is a saying which predicts the future character of the son. Commentators have long noticed the disconnected fashion in which these verses are arranged with the repetition of the phrase, "And the malak said to her,"

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the "Beschuldigungsformel" which is the question ("What is this thing you have done?") which initiates the dialogue between the two partners in a dispute. He classifies this as a formula belonging to a prejudicial situation but emphasizes the importance of its relationship to the court procedure (Redeformen, p. 29).

two additional times after its original use in vs. 9.[228] Furthermore, vs. 11 seems more appropriate before vs. 10 than after it,[229] and the name Ishmael, which is given to the child because God has hearkened to or given heed to Hagar's affliction, seems in contradiction to the command by the angel to return to Sarah and be submissive to her. It could be added that the announcement in vs. 11 is superfluous since the pregnancy of Hagar is the presupposition of the whole narrative. In addition to these factors, the reference to a "God of seeing" and to Hagar's having "seen" the effects of God's appearance, is not related to anything that has transpired in vss. 7-13 and is very obviously related to the events in H-1. So this narrative appears to be a series of elements that have been arranged according to the plan of a basic form, but beyond the unity given by this arrangement, have no real coherence.

The reason in AI is related to the motif of the test rather than to the redemption of Isaac. The explanation is not given for this strange demand God has made upon Abraham. The language is appropriate to the legal nature of a "test." Now God _knows_ that within his heart Abraham fears God. In view of the importance of Isaac in this narrative one might have expected that at least part of the reason would have concerned him as is the case in H-1 and H-2. This need has been met by the addition of a second reason in vss. 15ff. The secondary nature of this passage is generally acknowledged.[230] What has not been seen is that the addition of this passage has an inner relation to the foregoing. As it was shown above, the promise of blessing and increase belongs to the stage of the

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[228] Cf. Wellhausen, _Hexateuch_, p. 20; Gunkel, p. 184.

[229] _Ibid._; also Simpson, p. 71.

[230] It is generally assigned to the JE redactor: Wellhausen, _Hexateuch_, p. 18; _et al_.

the tradition in which Isaac and Abraham are being unified. The promise of blessing and increase is particularly associated with Isaac (26:23f.). But according to 26:4 the giving of this promise to Isaac was dependent upon Abraham's obedience in ch. 22. Since the verbatim similarity between 22:15ff. and 26:4 makes it evident that they are from the same hand, the conclusion must be that the promise was added to 22:1-14 as a way of connecting the promise distinctive to Isaac with Abraham. The writer of 26:4 wanted to say that this promise to Isaac was made possible by the obedient act of Abraham in ch. 22. So one can say that 22:15ff. represents a promise to Isaac even though it is not directly addressed to him.

c. The Act of God

In H-2 the act of God, emphasizing the artificial nature of this narrative, is missing. The eyes of Hagar in H-1 are opened by God, and she sees a well of water and thus can save the life of her child. To this she could have appropriately responded, "Thou art a God of seeing." Upon seeing the well she could appropriately have said, "Even here, I have seen the effects of an appearance of God." And a very suitable name for this well would have been, a "Well of Living Seeing," since seeing it had saved the life of her child. The fact that God had heard the cry of the child might have furnished a good reason for naming the child, "Ishmael," or God hears. There is in H-1, however, no response whatever to this miraculous event, and the name Ishmael is not mentioned once. All of these responses which are appropriate to H-1 are now found at the conclusion of H-2 where, as it was pointed out above, they have no real connection with what transpires in the preceding narrative. The only logical conclusion is that there was an original Hagar-Ishmael narrative which stands behind both H-1 and H-2. The original story told of the miraculous discovery of a well, the saving of the baby Ishmael's life (perhaps at birth?) and the subsequent naming of both Ishmael and the well on the basis of this event. This story in the history of the tradition was brought into relationship with Abraham so that (a) Abraham would be the father of Ishmael, and (b) Hagar and Ishmael would eventually be separated from the household of Abraham. The story told of the naming of the child while it was very young at a well in the wilderness, but it could not appear that Abraham had allowed his firstborn son to be cast into the wilderness while still a babe, and to grow up there. So the narrative was divided. Hagar would leave twice to go to this place in the wilderness. The first time would be before the child was born and a divine figure would appear to her, telling her to return. This would nevertheless provide an occasion for the naming of the child and the well in response to this appearance. Later she would be permanently driven away and would return to the well where the appearance of God then could be the same as in the original legend: the saving of the life of the child. But since the etiologies of this well and of Ishmael's name have already been given in the first legend, they have to be simply omitted. In their place now stands a bland narrative comment telling what happened subsequently to the boy.[231]

In AI the act of God is not in "opening" the eyes of Abraham as it was in H-1, but in providing the ram caught in the bushes. Abraham looked for God but instead saw his action; he had left a ram behind him which could be used for a sacrifice in place of Isaac. The response of Abraham to this event was similar to Hagar's. He named the place after the character of this miraculous event. The narrator has added to this a saying from his own time which seemed appropriate, but which in fact does not entirely fit the context: "In the mount, Yahweh appears." Abraham has not actually seen Yahweh but rather has only heard his voice and seen the result of his actions. The narrative concludes in vs. 19 with the report that Abraham returned to Beersheba.

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[231] The chief distinctions which Gunkel finds between these two sagas are in the realm of the different personality characteristics of Hagar in each of them. It is however, very difficult to speak of the personality of any of the figures in these early narratives and such distinctions as there are may also be explained on the basis of the differing situations in the two narratives. In one Hagar is a proud young woman who has proven herself to be more pleasing in the eyes of Abraham than her mistress, and in the other she is a mother with a child to care for (p. 232).

Addenda

There are two additional narratives which can be included in the Type III category but should not be discussed in the regular form analysis for various reasons. They are Gen. 46:1-4 and 32:23-33.

The form of 46:1-4 is patterned after the Type III form. There is the occasion ("So Israel came to Beersheba. . .and offered sacrifices. . ."), the summons by name ("Jacob, Jacob"), the standard response ("Here am I"), and the command (". . .do not be afraid to go down to Egypt. . ."). Whereas the other narratives in Type III have some relation to an old tradition, this narrative seems to be a very late construction whose form is only based on an old type of narrative associated with the region of Beersheba.[232] This narrative along with the others contains three characters. The child, Joseph, is not in the narrative, however, but is in Egypt; and it is now the parent who needs the child rather than the child needing the parent. Jacob is going into Egypt to receive assistance from Joseph! This transformation of the old form betrays the mentality of a later period at a number of points. The knowledge of the Exodus is presupposed by both the fact that Joseph is in Egypt, and the promise given to Jacob that he shall eventually be brought out of Egypt. Furthermore, such a free adaptation of an old traditional form as this narrative reflects, is a certain indication of its late origin. It belongs to the final period of the unification of the old traditions when the relationship between Jacob and Isaac was probably already presupposed since Jacob is here completely out of his territory offering a sacrifice to "the God of his father Isaac" at the cult center associated with Isaac in Beersheba. The presence of the name of Joseph in the narrative is also an indication that the process of unifying Joseph and Jacob had already begun.

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[232] Cf. Gunkel, ". . .sie ist eine Neubildung auf Grund einer älteren Kultussage." (p. 462.)

Though this narrative itself is not an old one, it is very significant that the form is based upon the type which as Gen. 22 shows was associated with Isaac and the cult center at Beersheba (though events in the legend did not take place at Beersheba). This is a further indication that Type III is an established genre of cult legend which originated in the southern Palestinian cultus.

The second passage to be considered is 32:23-33. This narrative of Jacob's struggle with the mysterious stranger at the river Jabbok constitutes a unique and completely independent unit of tradition. Its form is in no way related to Types I, II, or III, but it has been included under Type III because its central motif is similar to the motif of this type of narrative. Jacob has an experience of "seeing," and he struggles and pleads with God for a favorable judgment about his future.

Because there is no comparable narrative in Genesis, it is impossible to determine the original form of this narrative with any degree of accuracy and certainty. The most that can be done is to find the general genre to which it belongs by referring to extra-Biblical literature. When this is done, precise form comparisons are no longer possible since there is no concrete continuity of tradition between the two legends.

Gunkel has gathered out of later literature a number of narratives which parallel this narrative. He cites the struggle between Beowulf and Grendel from German folk literature, the saga of Grettir and Ormr Storolfsson from the Icelandic sagas, and Menelaus and Proteus from classical Greek literature, to name only a few.[233] More recently Hölscher has found what he believes to be the background to the heroic figure of Jacob which this narrative reflects in the story of the brothers Usoos and Samemrumos (Parallel to Esau and Jacob) in Phoenician mythology. But he does not cite a specific parallel to the Jabbok event.[234] It is clear that the motif of man's struggle with a super-human assailant is quite widespread, and the origin of this legend is to be found in the sphere of mythological folk literature in the ancient world.

The tradition-history of this story has been the subject of some considerable disagreement. The source critical school has been very divided over whether the passage is a unified J account,[235] or a JE combination.[236] The chief reasons for the source division have been: (1) the doublet in vss. 23-24 (MT), (2) the doublet in vss. 26a and 26b, (3) the two name inquiries in vss. 27-29 and 30. But as Volz and Rudolph have shown, both of the so-called doublets can be explained as complementary remarks designed to describe more fully what occurred in the previous statements.[237] It is, of course, possible that 26b conceals the fact that in an earlier form of this story still reflected in 26a, Jacob had struck the decisive blow against the assailant;[238] but the reasons for repressing this would already have been at work in the E as well as the J document. This can best be understood as the glimmer of an old pre-Israelite tradition that was modified in the Israelite traditions from the very beginning.

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[233] *Genesis*, p. 364.

[234] *Geschichtsschreibung*, p. 64.

[235] Wellhausen, *Hexateuch*, p. 44; Smend, *Erzählung des Hex.*, attributes it to J-1, p. 83; Noth, *ÜP*, finds an addition in 23b but attributes the whole to J, p. 31; Hölscher, *Geschichtsschreibung*, attributes it to J, p. 22; Volz and Rudolph, pp. 116f.

[236] Gunkel, p. 359; Skinner, pp. 407ff.; Procksch, pp. 193, 372.

[237] *Irrweg*, pp. 117f.

The two name inquiries can likewise be understood best as reflecting two stages in the growth of this ancient narrative rather than as evidence of two parallel accounts.[239] The basic legend is found in 23-27, 30-32. This was the legend which belonged to the Jacob tribes originally before they became a part of the Leah amphictyony west of the Jordan. It was associated with the cult center at Peniel on the Jabbok river which was east of the Jordan and northeast of the Dead Sea. As it was shown above, this is the area in which the Jacob tribes were originally located. Peniel was probably an important cult center for these tribes during this early period, and it would be strange if the cultic legend from this period had not been preserved. The second stage in the growth of the narrative took place when the Jacob tribes became a part of the six tribe Israel amphictyony at Shechem (later at Bethel). Verses 28 and 29 were inserted into this ancient Jacob legend at this time and reflect the success of the Jacob tribes in establishing a foothold west of the Jordan.[240] Evidence of the fact that this legend underwent very little change during the later period of the Yahwistic amphictyony is the fact that the name Yahweh is completely missing from it.[241]

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[238] Gunkel, p. 361; von Rad, Genesis, p. 315; John L. McKenzie, SJ, "Jacob at Peniel: Gen. 32:24-32," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 25 (1963), p. 72.

[239] Cf. F. von Trigt, "La Signification de la Lutte de Jacob pres du Yabboq Gen. 32:23-32," Studies on the Book of Genesis, Oudtestamentische Studiën XII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), pp. 280-309, who distinguishes between pre-Israelite and Israelite levels of the tradition and between an oral and written level within the Israelite stage.

[240] Cf. Jepsen, p. 148.

Conclusion

Now some conclusions can be stated concerning the origin and history of Type III. The original situation out of which this narrative grew is more easily identifiable than is the case with either of the other types. The background of the form, as such, is in legal life. The situation with which it is related is the most basic of all judicial proceedings: the hearing. The total procedure reflected in these narratives consists of first a protest or outcry. This is then "heard" by the judge who in turn summons the party responsible for the difficulty before him by name, asks him a question about the problem and then instructs as to what he must do. That such a judicial procedure could have been influencial on the formation of cultic legends is evident from the significance which cult sites such as Kadesh had as places where disputes between nomadic desert tribesmen could be settled. The form of such a cultic legend could have easily antedated the Yahwistic religion.

The geographical origin of this form can also be determined. In general it can be said that this is a cultic form that is at home in the cult sites in the desert and semi-desert regions of southern Palestine and the Negeb. It thus should not be considered as an expression of Canaanite religion since it had no relationship to the nature religions of those who till the soil. To be sure, the central deity of the legend may be an El as in H-2, but this is no more than a general designation for deity and does not presuppose, in and of itself, a connection with the Canaanite pantheon.

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[241] Volz and Rudolph have noticed the loose connection of both name inquiries to this legend, Irrweg, p. 118.

More specifically these legends in Genesis are associated with an oasis south of Kadesh named Beer-Lahai-Roi. This is clear in the case of H-1 and H-2, but for AI it must be inferred from its relationship with the figure of Isaac. (See below.) The form could have passed into the Isaac traditions, when, as Noth believes, Isaac and Ishmael were bound together at this desert cultic site,[242] long before the figures of Isaac and Abraham were related.

The deep roots of this type of legend in cultic traditions of the south are illustrated by I Kings 19:1-17. There in the story of Elijah's journey to Horeb the Type III form underlies a series of encounters between Yahweh and Elijah. After fleeing from Jezebel the account says that Elijah went "a day's journey in the wilderness, and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked that he might die saying, 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life. . .!'" An angel comes and instructs him to eat, and he opens his eyes and sees bread and water. The angel returns and instructs him to eat in preparation for a long journey. He then goes to Horeb where Yahweh asks him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?", a question resembling the one the angel addressed to Hagar. After Elijah's answer he is instructed to return and carry out certain plans. The resemblance of the form underlying these encounters and those in Genesis is striking and offers some evidence that the Type III form continued to live in the cult centers of the Negeb for many hundreds of years.

The tradition history of the Hagar legend falls into three general stages: (1) pre-Yahwistic stage: the legend is an Ishmaelite cultic saga telling of the miraculous saving of the life of Ishmael while he was still a small baby; (2) early Yahwistic stage (oral): the cultic legend about Ishmael is included in a narrative which explains both why Ishmael is a son of Abraham and why his descendants are no longer among the other descendants of Abraham, i.e., the Israelites (ch. 16 in its original form); (3) final Yahwistic stage (written): the narrative is divided into H-1 and H-2 to prevent Ishmael from leaving Abraham before Isaac is born.

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[242]" *UP*, pp. 118f.

The tradition history of Gen. 22 is more difficult to discern. Already the inner tension between the figures of Abraham and Isaac in this legend has been pointed out. The motif of the "test" is not compatible with the motif of the "rescue." In light of the separate existence of the form associated with the rescue motif it appears that it belongs to the older stratum of this narrative, and the test to the secondary stage of its development.[243] But what can then be said about the origin and nature of this older narrative? With respect to its origin there is no reason to doubt that Isaac was originally the central figure and that it was the main cultic legend of the Isaac traditions. It has already been shown that this form originated in the south probably at Beer-Lahai-Roi, and since Isaac was independently associated with this place, there is every reason to believe that this was originally an Isaac legend. But who, then, would have been the parent? There are some grounds for believing that Sarah filled this role in the original legend rather than Abraham: (1) in the very similar Ishmael narrative the mother, Hagar, plays this role rather than a male figure; (2) the mother-child relationship is more of a primordial relation than that of the father and child; (3) Sarah and Isaac are already related in the oldest stratum of Gen. 18 and Sarah in the later development has also been pushed back into a secondary role behind Abraham; (4) there is a possibility that Sarah was the name of a goddess who was located in the mountains southeast of Palestine in the region of Petra and could have easily passed into the traditions of a nomadic tribe who wandered in that general area.[244] Later the goddess figure would have become the matriarch of the tribe. Admittedly none of these reasons taken alone is sufficient for proving the original presence of Sarah in this legend but taken together they do make this a possibility.

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[243] Noth's objection that Isaac plays a completely passive role in this narrative and therefore could not have been the central figure in the original legend was not substantiated by the form analysis (UP, p. 126, note 329). His traditio-historical objections will be answered below.

It is now possible to distinguish between three stages in the historical development of this narrative: (1) pre-Yahwistic stage: the Sarah-Isaac legend which told of the miraculous prevention of the sacrifice of Isaac by his mother; (2) early Yahwistic stage (oral): the figures of Abraham and Isaac are unified in this legend through the use of the motif of the test; (3) final Yahwistic stage (written): this legend is included as a part of the whole patriarchal narrative and vss. 15-18 are added in order to achieve integration. More will be said below about the significant role played by this narrative during the oral stage of the tradition in unifying the figures of Abraham and Isaac.

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[244] Meyer, Nachbarstämme, p. 270. This might explain the secondary nature of Sarah's attachment to Mamre; cf. Noth, ÜP, p. 125.

CONCLUSIONS

A. The Tradition History of the Cultic Legends

In tracing the tradition history of these legends there are three basic criteria which can be used to identify the stage of the tradition to which a given legend belongs. The first is the degree to which it presupposes a relationship between two or more of the originally separate patriarchal figures; the second is the extent to which the similarity of literary style and formulae of a given legend with other cultic legends presupposes a common authorship or an origin in the same stage of the tradition; the third is the extent to which the central religious motif of a legend is dependent on the one hand upon a given period in the development of patriarchal and national religion, and on the other hand, on central motifs in other cultic legends.

The procedure to be followed in presenting the conclusions will be first to begin with the last stage of the tradition and work back to the earliest in order to uncover the genuine old patriarchal cultic legends which are unique in their own right and do not presuppose a relationship to the later history or religion of Israel. Then the growth of the tradition will be traced by correlating the stages in the growth of the legends with the history of tribal movements in the early period of Israelite history as it was portrayed in Chapter One, and by examining the dynamic inter-relationship of the religious motifs of these legends as they came together in the oral, and then written stage of the tradition. It should be made clear at the outset, however, that in reconstructing the process in which these traditions came together the picture presented must reflect primarily the evidence found in the cultic legends and not the total traditio-historical evidence in all of the patriarchal legends. This is necessarily so in view of the limited nature of this investigation. This means that no claims are being made for the complete adequacy of this reconstruction, but it is felt that an attempt should be made, nevertheless, to view the tradition history from the perspective of the cultic legends as a contribution to later investigations which will embrace the whole of the patriarchal corpus.

The final stage in the development of the patriarchal cultic legends is in those legends normally assigned to P: Gen. 35:9-15 and Gen. 17. The late origin of these legends is evident at a number of points. Gen. 17 includes mention of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael, thus all of the major figures in the Abraham legends. Since it presupposes the unity of all of these figures it clearly stands at the end of the process through which they came to be unified. Gen. 35 (vss. 9-15 will be the presupposed reference) does not presuppose a relationship between any other major figures in Genesis, and so its age has to be established from inner evidence.

The analysis of the form and wording of the promise in these narratives revealed both a dependence upon and a divergence from the other types of promises. In ch. 35 the promise of blessing and increase has become a command to be fruitful and multiply in keeping with the tendency of this late tradition to present the words of Yahweh in the form of laws.[1] In ch. 17 the reference to fruitfulness and multiplicity is in the form of a promise, but it is preceded by a command. Now the end result of the fruitfulness of Abraham will not only be a nation, as in the earlier narratives, but a "company of nations" and a "multitude of nations." In both passages the climax to this promise is that kings shall eventually come out of his lineage. This hope unmistakably reflects the mentality of the kingdom and not the patriarchal or even the amphictyonic ages. It is not found in any of the other promises. The promise of land likewise shows some affinity with the previous promises of land but now clearly represents a distinctive formulation of it. The promise of land in ch. 35 includes reference to the fact that the land had been "given" to Abraham and Isaac and would thus also be given to Jacob. That this is a late formulation is evident not only from the mention of Abraham and Isaac in the promise itself, but also because of its very loose connection with the preceding promise. In ch. 17 it includes the phrase "land of thy sojourning" which is distinctive to the P tradition,[2] and the phrase, "for an everlasting possession," which is unique to the promise of land in this passage. This promise is likewise connected to the preceding promises very awkwardly by a repetition of the covenant declaration ("And I will establish my covenant between me and you. . ."). The promise of land is thus not only a late construction by the P tradition but is probably also a late addition even to these P narratives.

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[1] Cf. von Rad, Theology of the O.T., pp. 232f.

The final evidence of the lateness of these passages is the unique combination of promise motifs found here. The promise of posterity and of land were originally independent motifs. Now in these narratives they are combined and elaborated. The other promises of posterity are based on an assurance of blessing, an old motif stemming from Canaanite religion, but here in ch. 17 it is based upon the covenant between God and Abraham.

These narratives, because of their very loose relation to their contexts, were probably added after the Pentateuch had been fixed in written form.

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[2] Skinner, p. 293.

The next stage in the tradition is the composition of what could be called the J-E document. In analyzing the relation of the traditions in this document, however, it will be necessary to go behind the question of the literary documents to which these traditions may have originally belonged, and ask a more fundamental question about the stage in the history of tradition in which they originated. Since it has not yet been proved that the J and E traditions developed during the oral period in complete isolation from one another, the possibility of interaction and mutual influence must be reckoned with, i.e., the possibility that there is only one tradition history, (Noth's "G"), rather than completely separate streams of tradition.

Moving, as it were, from the surface downward, the first passages to be encountered are those which either presuppose or attempt to effect a unification of separate traditions or contain the motifs which characterize the final stage of unification. These can be old legends that have been reinterpreted and reformulated to reflect the mentality of the writers, notices which do not bear any traces of old tradition, and additions to older legends which bring them into harmony with the later views. In the last category is 22:15-18, 28:15, 20-22, and 15:13-16. The narrative to which 22:15-18 is attached presupposes the unity of the figures of Abraham and Isaac, and so the other passages which are literarily related to it must also belong to a time in which this unity was presupposed. The promise of blessing in this narrative is stylistically almost identical to the one in 26:4 and is certainly closely related to the more abbreviated form in 26:23f. This has caused the source critics great difficulty since 22:15ff. is commonly attributed to E (or an E redaction), and 26:23f. is firmly established in the center of a long J narrative. The passage containing the third parallel promise, 26:1-5, is located at the beginning of the J narrative and so can be viewed as a transition and consequently divided into small J and E fragments.[3] It is obvious that the source theory is hard pressed to provide a reason for the presence of these promises (esp. 26;24) which are so clearly related to an E passage in an otherwise clearly J narrative. If one views this problem from a traditio-historical viewpoint then the conclusion is inescapable that 26:24 presupposes a knowledge of the interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac found in 22:15ff. and 26:4. It is then necessary to move one further step: if this passage, firmly rooted in a J narrative, presupposes knowledge of the interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac found in 22:15ff.then it also presupposes knowledge of 22:1-14 in basically its present form.

This becomes more significant in light of the evidence uncovered by the form analysis that 26:3f. belongs to the same type of cultic legend as 12:7ff. and 28:10ff., both of which are generally acknowledged to be J material. That it does indeed belong to the same tradition complex as 12:7 and 28:10ff. is supported by the fact that this form is not found in any passage attributed to E.[4] This does not mean that the author(s) of this J stratum of tradition was the same as that of 22:15ff. and 26:4, but only that he was aware of 22;1-14 and knew the interpretation of it which came to be formulated in these E passages. This raises the possibility which will be further examined below that 22:1-14 played an important role in the unification of the Abraham and Isaac traditions during the oral period.[5]

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[3] Cf. Eissfeldt, Hexateuchsynopse (assigns 26:3ff. to J but the context to L); Gunkel, p. 300, 303; Skinner, p. 363; Noth, UP, p. 30 (classifies them as "Wucherungen" rather than attributing them to E).

[4] It does recur in P material, but it is clear that 26:23f. does not belong to this group of traditions.

[5] Noth has commented that ch. 22 rests upon an old tradition which goes

The second addition which intends to unify separated bodies of tradition is 28:15 and 20-22. These verses are the only ones in this narrative which presuppose that Jacob is on a journey. They intend to provide a basis in the divine promise for the unification of the east Jordanian and west Jordanian Jacob traditions. They thus belong to one of the last stages in the unification of these patriarchal traditions.

One further addition to an old narrative which serves a similar function is 15:13-16. These verses presuppose a knowledge of the Exodus tradition and intend to provide a basis in this early promise narrative for understanding the sojourn in Egypt. The attempt to account for the Exodus tradition here parallels the attempt to account for the east Jordanian Jacob tradition in 28:15 and 30ff.

This addition probably belongs to the same stage of the tradition as the short notice in 46:1-5. The concern in this narrative is also with foretelling the Exodus and grounding the fact of the presence of "Jacob" in Egypt upon divine guidance. Both this passage and 15:13ff. have also been assigned to E. As it was shown above, there is no genuine old tradition behind this notice, and so it is reasonably certain that this is a late construction built upon an old form which is intended to connect the Palestinian Jacob tradition with the Egyptian Exodus tradition.

So at the beginning of the journey downward a number of additions and notices have been encountered which intend to relate separate traditions and generally to provide a basis for that relationship in the divine will. These presuppose the unification of all of the patriarchal traditions and even the unification of the patriarchal and Exodus traditions. All of the passages in this stratum belong to the E source, but because

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back into the early history of the nation (*ÜP*, p. 253, 256, note 621).

of the close relationship between Gen. 26:23, which is assigned to J, and 22:15ff., both of which presuppose ch. 22 (E) in its present form, the possibility of an early interaction between J and E during the period of oral tradition has been raised.

But what can now be said about the series of notices and reinterpreted old legends with the same basic form as 26:23 seem to lie just beneath this E stratum? The first to be considered is the old reinterpreted legend in 28:10ff. As it was shown above this legend is built upon an ancient tale telling of the founding of the cult center at Bethel. Jacob first came to be the chief character during the time when the early Leah amphictyony was located there. Now, however, it has been filled out with promises in at least two successive stages. The last of these was mentioned above. The first brought the addition of the land promise. The period in which the land promise was attached to this legend can be established because of its stylistic similarity with the land promise in 13:15 and the parallel process of composition in evidence in both narratives. Both represent ancient Bethel legends which have been taken over and made the bearers of a parallel land promise (and also a parallel promise of posterity). The stylistic interdependence of these narratives makes it evident that they have originated in the same circle of traditionists and in the same period of time. This means that in this circle of traditionists at the time of the composition of these narratives, Abraham and Jacob were already unified. The traditionists were dealing with both Abraham traditions and Jacob traditions and treating them in the same way. Since the unification of Abraham and Jacob presupposes the existence of Isaac as the connecting link, 28:10ff. must therefore belong to one of the later stages in the development of the patriarchal traditions. That the unification of Abraham and Isaac is presupposed by this stage of the tradition is also evidenced in the self-identification formula at the outset, "I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. . . ."

These two narratives have at least one other common characteristic which they also share with a third "notice" in this same stratum of tradition. They locate a patriarchal figure at one of the major cult centers in the central Palestinian area outside of the region with which he is primarily associated. This also occurs in the short notice in 12:7 which locates Abraham at Shechem. The same is partly true of 26:23f. which provides for the giving of the promise to Isaac at Beersheba in the apparent absence of such a tradition. Though the major body of Isaac traditions is localized at Beersheba, there are grounds for arguing that the figure of Isaac was originally related to Beer-Lahai-Roi south of Kadesh, and that the primary Isaac cultic legend (ch. 22) was first localized in that area. Genesis 26:23 would then represent a secondary effort to provide an occasion for the giving of the promise to Isaac at a recognized Palestinian cult center. In this way it would belong to the same general stage in the tradition process as 12:7ff. and 28:10ff. It should be noted, however, that the promises themselves in these narratives are all differently worded. The promise of land in 12:7 is literarily related to 15:18, 24:6, and perhaps also to 26:4. Since both the Bethel traditions and this group of narratives are attributed to J, it would thus appear that there were at least two separate circles of traditionists within this same general stratum of the tradition which passed down these promises.[6]

These two circles of traditionists shared the same concerns and used the same form for shaping these cultic legends and so must have been very closely related both in time and spirit. The form used provides some evidence concerning the time in which these narratives originated. The form itself, consisting of the appearance of Yahweh, the self-identification formula and promise, and the altar building by the patriarch, was shown above to be based upon the oath ceremony. In these accounts Yahweh appears to give his promissory oath to the patriarch. Since in each case this appearance takes place close to the beginning of the patriarch's adult life, the intention of the traditionists was to make this oath the basis of the patriarch's relation to God. This type of legend was to be the primary cultic legend in patriarchal religion. But as it was shown in Chapter One, the belief that man's relation to God could be based upon nothing more than a word of promise reflects the religious mentality of the amphictyony and not that of patriarchal-tribal religion. This religion was based upon a blood relationship with the deity and upon concrete manifestations of his power in miraculous events both in "nature" and "history." The appreciation of the oath as a supreme manifestation of power only arose as individual tribes began uniting for various reasons. When there was no common blood bond between them, then it was necessary to trust a verbal declaration as a basis for the establishment of a community. The origin of this mentality in Israel can easily be traced back to the early days in Israel when the first amphictyonic groups were being formed in the north at Shechem and Bethel and in the south at Hebron.

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[6] This does not mean that a J writer could not have tied these traditions together.

The promise of land which is the fundamental element in most of these narratives can likewise best be understood as a product of the religious life of these early amphictyonies since the formation of an amphictyony clearly was the line of demarcation between the nomadic life and settled life, and the possession of land is the major concern only of people who have abandoned nomadism.[7] The only genuine old narrative containing a promise of land as an integral part which is not based on this oath form is 15:7ff. But the promise here is even more clearly than elsewhere based upon a covenant oath. Even though it is now joined with the older lamentation form it still unmistakably reflects the amphictyonic religious mentality. Thus even this narrative cannot be used as evidence for an early origin for the promise of land. The conclusion is thus that 12:7, 26:23f., and 28:10ff. in their present form were the products of a stage in the tradition in which the Israelites believed that the basis of man's relation to God was a word of promise or a covenant oath and thus that the basis of the patriarchal religion was also a promissory oath given to the patriarchs at some of the major cult centers of Palestine. The origin of this belief had to be after the formation of the first amphictyonies, but the origin of these particular accounts was undoubtedly during the later stages in the composition of the patriarchal narrative.

Gen. 15:7ff. provides a bridge which leads back to the early oral stage of the patriarchal legends. In this stage is found genuine old cultic legends from the patriarchal period which, though they have often been combined with later material, have still retained much of their original form. Genesis 15:7ff. itself is an independent legend which shows signs of being based upon a very ancient independent cultic legend (the references to the old sacrificial rite in vss. 9, 10, 11, and 17). But there is also a great deal of evidence that it has been thoroughly reworked by later traditionists. The formulation of the promise of land stands in a close literary relationship with 12:7, 24:7, and 26:4, all of which belong to a late stage of the tradition. The self-identification at the beginning contains the "bringing out" motif which surely is derived from the Exodus tradition. Furthermore, the explicit formulation of the promise as a covenant oath presupposes the amphictyonic religious mentality. In contrast to the other promise narratives, however, the form of 15:7ff. is based on that of a cultic salvation oracle just as 15:1-6. But the elements in this structure—the self-presentation of Yahweh, the lament of Abraham, and the promissory oath—all belong to a late stage of the tradition. The conclusion must then be that 15:7ff. represents a secondary development in the Abraham traditions which has borrowed the form of an earlier lamentation over the lack of a son. In the formulation of this secondary tradition an old tribal sacrificial rite was appropriated and made to appear as a covenant sacrifice. Chapter 15 thus represents the two major stages in the development of the patriarchal traditions: the first is the genuine old patriarchal cultic legend which deals with the need for blessing and posterity, and the second deals with the need of the young amphictyonies for land. These two stages are also reflected in two old Jacob traditions: 32:23ff. and 28:10ff. It was shown above that 28:10ff. represents a secondary appropriation of an old Bethel legend by first the Leah, and then the later northern amphictyony. The promise of land has been made the initial and thus the most basic promise in this legend, thereby reflecting the need of the amphictyony. Genesis 32:23ff., however, is an old east Jordanian Jacob tradition that antedates the west Jordan amphictyonies, and the basic concern of this legend is not the acquisition of land but rather the divine blessing (i.e., probably fertility since this was connected very closely with the blessing). Thus 32:23 and 28:10 represent the two basic stages in the Jacob tradition that are parallel to the two reflected in 15:1-6 and 7ff. in the Abraham traditions.

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[7] Alt, KS, p. 66, who also relates this promise to a secondary stage. The reason for the special relation of Isaac to the promise of numerous posterity in 26:23 rather than the promise of land will be discussed below.

Of particular importance in the patriarchal traditions is the old cultic salvation oracle in 15:1-6. Though the continued life which this legend is likely to have had in oral tradition has caused some later changes (vss. 1, 3, and 6), the basic elements of the legend can be considered as very old. It is important because it is one of the real points of contact which the later tradition found with patriarchal religion. This point of contact was the need for posterity. Originally, before ch. 14 was inserted,[8] and before 15:1 was reworded by a later hand, this legend was probably related to Mamre where Abraham is located at the end of ch. 13. This motif is very similar to that of the other Abraham legend at Mamre (ch. 18).

The promise of a son is repeated in ch. 18. This legend as it now stands represents the fusion of two independent legends, however. Abraham and Sarah (by implication, also Isaac) are unified here thus indicating that it is a secondary formation. The segement of this narrative taken from an old Abraham legend is now the introduction telling of the visit of the three divine strangers and the meal which Abraham gave them under the oak at Mamre. The segment belonging originally to the figure of Sarah is the promise of a son, her skeptical response, and the repeated assurance of the divine spokesman. Since it is customary in the type of legend represented here for there to be only one person in the presence of the deity, Abraham and Sarah were both brought into the presence of the three divine messengers in an ingenious way. Sarah was placed inside the tent but close enough so that she could overhear what was being said! It is clear, however, that after the phrase, "And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him," the dialogue is actually between Sarah and the messengers even though she is still apparently in the tent. This certainly represents an imaginative reinterpretation of the old Sarah legend. Sarah's lament over the lack of a child has now even become a laugh! This was doubtlessly suggested by the name Isaac which the narrator was interested in connecting with Abraham. Since Sarah's connection with Isaac is more fundamental than her connection with Abraham, this old Sarah legend probably belonged among the original Isaac legends. There would thus have been an old lamentation of Sarah among the Isaac traditions that was very similar to the lamentation of Abraham in 15:1-6, thereby providing a convenient point of contact between these two southern traditions around the motif of the delayed birth of a son.

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[8] Cf. Gunkel, esp. p. 288.

Also representing the combination of two patriarchal figures in this early stratum of Israelite tradition is Gen. 22. In this narrative the originally quite separate motifs of the "test" and the rescue of Isaac have been fused together in a most dramatic way. The life of Isaac, the child who embodies the promise, is now portrayed as being threatened in order to test Abraham's faith in God's ability to fulfill his promises. The singular distinction of this narrative is that it not only contains the motif of the threatened promise as do the other narratives in this stratum of tradition, but it also provides a reason for the threat. The reason the promise to Abraham had to be so radically threatened was to test Abraham's faith. The question which must be raised now is, what is the traditio-historical relationship between the motifs of the promise, the threatened promise and the explanation of the threatened promise?

The most original part of Gen. 22 is the story of the rescue of

Isaac which originally constituted the central cultic legend of the Isaac traditions. The form of this story is the same as the account of the rescue of Ishmael (21:15ff.), and originally Sarah was probably the parent figure as was Hagar in the Ishmael story. Very early in the history of Israel's traditions Abraham replaced Sarah in this narrative, thereby allowing the figures of Isaac and Abraham to be brought together in such a way as to provide an explanation for the extreme delay in the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. It was necessary for Abraham to give up hope that the promise would be fulfilled through Isaac as a test to his faith in God before Isaac could actually be the instrument of the fulfillment. Within this may be a theological explanation for the delay in the unification of the northern and southern tribes. Since this is one of the earliest narratives to unify the figures of Abraham and Isaac, the emergence of this narrative must have been an important traditio-historical event. It may have actually contributed to the unification of the northern and southern tribes and their traditions.

Belonging also to this stratum of early legends is the original Ishmael cultic legend which stands behind both 16:7ff. and 22:15ff., and was thus a part of what Noth terms, "G." In its original form it was completely independent of the figure of Abraham but has now in both versions been joined with a longer narrative which explains the nature of Hagar's relationship to Abraham. The form of the narrative as such does not bear any significant traces of amphictyonic influence and so provides an excellent example of a genuine old tribal cultic legend. The most important thing to note is that the central motif of the legend is the rescue of Ishmael which is brought about through a miraculous discovery of a well. God reveals himself through a wondrous event and not through a word of promise. Such concrete revelations are the mark of the early religion.

Any attempt to reconstruct the history of the patriarchal traditions must necessarily be very tentative since it involves an attempt to describe those nebulous historical and religious forces which brought the traditions together. It is necessary, nevertheless, to apply the evidence which this investigation has uncovered to this problem. The basic outlines of the history of this period are given in Chapter One and will be presupposed here.

The first stage in the history of these traditions is the period of the nomadic tribe. Belonging to this period are two types of old legends: cultic lamentations (Gen. 15:1-6 and 18:9-15), and what might be generally called miracle stories (22:7-14, 21:15-20, and 32:23-31). These legends all deal with the basic concern of nomadic tribal life: the need for the divine blessing and posterity. The need for land is not yet a part of their life necessities. Of these only the miracle stories could qualify as a type of legend on which a cult might be based. The lamentation presupposes a relationship to the deity, and the legend in which it stands could not be understood as containing the founding of a cult. The connection of the miracle legends with places does not rule out the possibility that they were rooted in the early nomadic period. Even nomads believe that deity dwells in certain places such as springs, wells, fords in rivers, ancient trees, etc. Their religion was not limited to such localized manifestations, but it is the legends concerning these that have been chosen for inclusion in Genesis. These legends are associated with cases such as Beer-Lahai-Roi, Beersheba, and Mamre on the fringes of the settled regions and in the desert area to the south of Canaan, and a ford in the Jabbok river named Peniel, east of the Jordan.

The second period in the history of this tradition is that of the invasion of the central Palestinian area by a coalition of Isaac clans, Reubenites, and what might be termed "proto-Benjaminites." The Isaac clans brought with them the fresh memories of the miraculous exodus from their oppressed life in Egypt, and their vigorous war-like spirit furnished the new inspiration for the invasion of the land west of the Jordan. The early unification of the Isaac clans with the Reubenites bearing the Jacob traditions in a coalition east of the Jordan, and the later establishment of a large amphictyony at the cult centers of Shechem and Bethel which had been the location of an earlier six tribe amphictyony of the sons of Jacob, brought about the unification of the Isaac and Jacob traditions.[9] The movement of the tribes bearing the Isaac traditions into the territory of the Jacob traditions, and consequently into coalition with the sons of Jacob, made the unification of Isaac and Jacob the first step in the formation of the present patriarchal genealogy.

A more serious problem, however, was the unification of the southern tradition of Abraham, now associated with a six tribe amphictyony at Hebron, with the northern traditions. This reflects the problem that existed all through this period of bringing the southern and northern amphictyonies together into a single unity. As it was shown, a basis for this unity already existed since the tribe of Judah, now in the southern group, had formerly been an active member of the northern six tribe Jacob amphictyony. The southern tribes did not join with the northern tribes, however, until period of the establishment of the kingship. One could thus expect to find a reflection of this long delayed unification of the Abraham traditions with the Jacob-Isaac traditions in the legends dealing with the relationship between Isaac and Abraham. One would also expect to find a different motif in those legends which unify Jacob and Isaac.

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[9] Contrary to Alt who attributes this unification to later pilgrimages into the south to Beersheba by the northern Jacob tribes (KS, p. 56). An earlier unification is more likely in view of the fact that the northern tribes bearing the Exodus traditions were originally Isaac clans.

This is precisely the case. Though one might say that the promise motif is the central unifying thread in both, the way the promise is treated is different in each. The primary old traditions which unify the figures of Isaac and Abraham are Gen. 18 and 22 which deal with the motif of the unfruitful wife and the threat to Isaac, the child of the promise. The question underlying both of these narratives is why the unification of Isaac with Abraham was so long in coming. The answer is twofold: because of the unfruitfulness of Isaac's mother, Sarah, and as a test to Abraham's (i.e., those who bore his traditions) faith in the promise. On the other hand, the central question underlying the unification of Isaac and Jacob is why Jacob, a northern figure turned out to be the favored son of Isaac rather than Esau who comes from the south where Isaac dwelt. No specific cultic legend in which Jacob and Isaac are unified contains the answer to this question, but it is reflected in the old Jacob cultic legend (Gen. 32: 23ff.) and in the story of the birth of Jacob and Esau. The answer is because Jacob was 'one who struggled and prevailed.'[10] Thus the delayed promise motif was the point of contact between the northern and southern traditions while the struggle for the blessing was the point of contact between the two patriarchal traditions of the northern tribes. It thus cannot be said that the promise of land and posterity was the specific point of contact between the later amphictyonic traditions and the Jacob traditions.[11]

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[10] Cf. Jepsen who rightly argues that this motif is fundamental to Jacob traditions. (p. 148.)

[11] Ibid., "Es ist daher auch wohl nicht richtig, dass die Offenbarung

It is impossible to make any clear distinctions between the previous stage of the tradition when various legends were arising which explained and perhaps justified the unification of tribes that was occuring on the political level, and the next stage in which various notices and reinterpreted cultic legends appear which present the promise of land and descendants as the basic element in patriarchal religion. Because of the almost identical wording and style in some of these legends it is probably not false to say that this stage represents the first written collection of the patriarchal legends. It can probably, therefore, be roughly equated with the work of J, although the differences in style where one would expect uniformity (e.g., in the two forms of the promise of land present in 12:7 and 15:18 on the one hand, and 28:13 and 13:15 on the other) indicate that the writing may have been done in more than one school of traditionists having the same religious views, and later united. The passages which belong to this period are 12:7, 15:7ff., 26:23f. and 28:10ff. The primary promise in all of these narratives except 26:23f is the promise of land. The reason for its absence from this Isaac legend is that the fundamental motif around which the Isaac traditions and Abraham traditions were united was the delayed fulfillment of the promise of a son. In addition the ancient Isaac cultic legend behind Gen. 22 had nothing to do with a promise of land, and so this promise was only once in a very late and unreliable passage (26:1-5) connected with Isaac. In the other passages, however, the amphictyonic concern to establish claim on the land in central Palestine is fully evident. The promise of land is given to them in the form of an

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der Vätergöttern nur Verheissung von Nachkommenschaft und Landbesitz zum Inhalt haben: es ist von Fall zu Fall die Überlieferung gesondert zu prüfen; und bei Jacob scheint die gewiss urtumliche Erzählung vom Kampf um den Segen der Gottheit das Eigentliche Theme der gesamten Jakob tradition an zu schlagen." (p. 148.).

oath sworn at Shechem, Mamre (?), and Bethel. It is thus at this time that the promissory oath came to be presented as the basis of the patriarchal religion. Behind this change the interests of the amphictyony in land and the unification of the tribes can be seen.

The next stage in this process is the completion of the JE document. This stage represents the inclusion of such genuine old legends as chs. 22, 15:1-6, and 21:15ff., as well as an inter-connecting notice as 46:1ff., and certain later additions to older legends as 15:13-16, 28:15, 20-22, and 22:15-18. The close relationship between the whole of ch. 22 from this stratum of tradition and 26:4, 26:23, and also 12:1-3 (also J material) makes it very likely that these two strata of tradition did not develop in isolation from one another. It would seem as Mowinckel has suggested, that this so-called E material represents an expansion and reinterpretation of the older J material which intends to bring it up to date.[12] There is nothing in this material that necessitates a late eighth or seventh century date,[13] so it is quite possible that this occurred during the Davidic-Solomonic period.

The final stage in this tradition process is the addition of the P material: Gen. 17 and 35:9-15. This material represents a much later tradition which was inserted in the narrative without any attempt to create smooth transitions. The major contribution to the history of the tradition in this material is the grounding of the promise of numerous posterity upon the covenant concept in 17:1 and 2. Though this tradition often contains very old material, it was probably not added to the JE document until after the Exile.

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[12] Sigmund Mowinckel, Erwägungen zur Pentateuch Quellenfrage (Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 1964), p. 116.

[13] "Andrerseits fehlt es doch an wirklichen Argumenten für die üblich gewordene Späterdatierung gegenüber J, und eine Ansetzung in der davidisch-salomonischen Zeit wäre durchaus möglich." Noth, UP, p. 249.

B. Implications for Understanding Patriarchal Religion

Now that the form and tradition history of the cultic legends have been studied, the implications which this has for the current debate on the nature of patriarchal religion should be indicated. The assumption of those investigations which stem from the work of Ablrecht Alt on "Der Gott der Väter" has been that there was a tribal cult centering in the worship of the God of the Fathers and that this cult was based upon the promise, first of children, and then of land. Noth can thus speak of the promise motif as the unifying theme of the old patriarchal traditions before their inclusion in the Yahwistic narrative.[14] Maag then carries the investigation further by attempting to describe more fully the nature of this religion of the promise. Finally Rendtorff and Zimmerli become involved in a debate over the question of whether the appearance of God or the promise is the most important feature of the patriarchal cultic legends.

When the promise narratives themselves are examined from a form critical and traditio-historical viewpoint it becomes necessary to break the general motif of the promise down into a number of different types of promises and stages of development.[15] The land promise was shown to be originally separate from the promise of a son and of posterity, and of considerably later origin. Within the motif of the promise of descendants, it was necessary to distinguish between the promise of a son, of numerous posterity, of nationhood, and of a king. Then an important distinction had to be made between the legend whose content was strictly the giving of the promise (e.g., Gen. 26:24), and those whose basic motif was the delayed fulfillment rather than simply the promise. All of the legends in the latter category are very old having their roots in the ancient tribal cultus. Of these there are two types: those which are based on an old cultic lament and oracle (15 and 18), and those based on a miracle story (22, 16:7ff. and 21:15ff.). In the latter group the promise plays practically no role at all since the center of the legend is a miraculous event. As to which of these is the more likely to have been the central cultic legend in a tribal cult, there is no question but that the latter would be. A lamentation does not establish a relationship with deity; it presupposes one.[16] The conclusion is then that in the very oldest type of tribal cultic legend the promise plays almost no role at all. Certainly the lamentation and the oracular response were probably a part of tribal religion and insofar as it was, one could say that the "promise" played a part in that religion.[17] But the cultus itself was not founded upon a promise given in an oracle but was rather founded on a more definite concrete type of divine manifestation—a manifestation of extraordinary power in some type of miraculous event. This can be seen not only in Gen. 21:15ff. and 22, but also in 32:23ff. There Jacob enters into hand-to-hand combat with a divine spirit and emerges not only with his life but also with the blessing of this deity. Such were the vivid and concrete representations of divine power in this type of relgion.

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[14] ÜP, p. 58.

[15] Cf. also Westermann, pp. 19-34.

If there was no religion of the promise, what is to be said about the patron deity of the patriarchal cult, the God of the Fathers? Can this part of Alt's thesis still be upheld? There are those who argue that Alt did not give enough attention to the literary critical problems connected with the names of this patriarchal deity, and that a close examination of these names will reveal that they are all either of late origin or clearly do not refer to a special deity by that name.[18] Others argue from a different viewpoint, that the lack of information about Canaanite religion at the time Alt was writing caused him falsely to juxtapose the tribal type of deity designated by the name, God of X, with the localized type of Canaanite El numen. Frank Cross argues on the one hand, that the Elim of Canaan were not local numina but cosmic deities who belonged to the Canaanite pantheon, and on the other hand that the patriarchs cannot be conceived of as pure nomads whose religion was in no way affected by the culture religions of Canaan and Mesopotamia.[19] He then proposes that there was no inherent incompatability between the tribal and cosmic gods and that they became a part of tribal religion at an early date.[20] If the patriarchs were not exclusively desert wanderers but rather moved along the fringes of the settled regions, as Cross and many others believe, then their tribal religion would not have been without signs of influence from that religion. If this is true then the idea of a nomadic "religion of the promise" that is fundamentally opposed to the Canaanite deities seems to vanish entirely.

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[16] The fact that 15:1-6 begins with a self-identification does not invalidate this assertion since it has been shown above that a self-identification as well, presupposes a relationship and cannot be the first encounter of a man with deity. The first encounter with deity is an encounter with divine power and not a matter of the god properly introducing himself!

[17] Cf. Scharbert, "Fast alle zitieren Texte, die einen Segenswunsch für die Nachkommen enthalten, sind Gebete." (p. 47.)

These criticisms are not as devastating to Alt's thesis as they might appear, however. To argue upon literary grounds alone that the construction of the name, God of X, is late or may refer to another deity, is not the final word which can be said about the possibility of the existence of such a deity. This question must be determined on the basis of what is known about ancient religion. From the religio-historical viewpoint, Cross has shown the *possibility* that tribal religion absorbed the Canaanite cosmic deities at an early date, but this still does not exclude the possibility that the worship of a type of deity more immediately related to the tribe might not have continued alongside the worship of the Canaanite El deities. In fact, this is the picture of patriarchal religion which Genesis portrays.

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[18] Herbert G. May, "The God of My Father---A Study of Patriarchal Religion," JBR, IX (1941), pp. 155-158, 199-200; K. T. Andersen, "Der Gott meines Vaters," Studia Theologica, 16 (1963), pp. 171-188.

[19] "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," pp. 235, 231.

[20] "When we read such a title as ʾēl ʾelōhe yisrāʾēl, 'El, the god of (the patriarch Jacob-) Israel,' it seems necessary to suppose that the older god of the Fathers, the tribal or clan deity or deities of the patriarchal stock, was early identified with the Canaanite ʾEl.'" Ibid., pp. 234f.

There are at least two good reasons for assuming that there was such a tribal cult which was not *too* unlike the cult of the fathers described by Alt. The first is that historians of religion have discovered the widespread belief in a personal deity in the ancient Near East.[21] This deity manifests itself through some unusual beneficial event in the life of the person and is then considered the protector and patron of that person and his family. Cross acknowledges the possible correspondence between this type of god and the patriarchal god and quotes T. Jacobsen as saying,

> I have the impression that a great deal of what is seen as true in Alt's view can be very greatly deepened by going into the Mesopotamian concept of the 'personal' god. . . . The elements of 'power to effective decision and acting' inherent in the concept of the 'personal god,' and the development in Mesopotamia around the time of the First Dynasty of Babylon which has the 'personal' god turn away from his protege in anger at cultic and moral offences leaving him open to attack by evil, all seems to me to have relevance here.[22]

It is, nevertheless, doubtful that the patriarchs founded a cult centering in the worship of a deity called the "God of Abraham," etc. In the passages which have been examined above, this name does not serve as an introduction of the deity, but is an adaptation of an oath formula. In giving his oath the deity is portrayed as calling his own name, or swearing by his own name, rather than by the name of another deity. It is an established fact that among Semitic nomads it is very common to swear by one's father or family.[23] So the name, "God of my Father," can best be understood as having originated in an oath formula in which the person swears by the El of, or the power of, his father. It is not uncommon for such oaths to be sworn at the grave of the father in order to directly contact his power believed to be residing in the tombstone.[24]

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[21] Henri Frankfort, "Sumerian Religion," *BANE*, pp. 267-278; also, *Before Philosophy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1949).

[22] "Sumerian Religion, " p. 259.

This does not necessarily mean that there was a tribal cult which worshipped the ancestor. It simply means that there was an awareness among the members of a clan that a mysterious numinous power manifested itself through the father's exercise of his authority as leader of the group.[25] It might be that the father had a personal god whom he honored, but just because this god was "personal," it could not be the god of the sons after the father's death. So it cannot be said that the father founded a cult, but only that the numinous power manifested itself through him and was recognized by members of the family. The power of the father could be called upon in connection with the taking of an oath because his name represented the power inherent in the family, and thus the strength and ability of the person to uphold the oath.

The conclusion is then that the name, "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" does not indicate the existence of a special tribal cult centered in the worship of this deity but was a divine appellation brought in because of its close association with the swearing of an oath. This took place during the period of the amphictyony when the oath or word of promise was being used to connect patriarchal religion with Yahwism. There is thus no connection between the God of the Fathers and the promise in pre-amphictyonic tribal religion, though there is some reason for believing that the name itself is genuine, or of an authentic type.

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[23] Pedersen, Eid, p. 135.

[24] Ibid., p. 136.

[25] Cf. van der Leeuw, p. 81.

The oldest cultic legends from the tribal period seem to be more at home in the world of the Canaanite deities whose functions were to give blessing and fertility (among others).[26] This is certainly the central concern of 15:1-6, 18:1-15, and 32:23ff. In the case of Hagar and Ishmael in 21:15ff., however, it is a different matter. Here, there is a personal manifestation to the founder of a tribe in a miraculous event. This probably comes closer to being a genuine cult-establishing legend than any in the book of Genesis (except for the original form of ch. 22). The central event here, however, is not the giving of a promise but the rescue of the child.

Hoftijzer would thus seem to be right, insofar as he attributes the present importance of the promise in the book of Genesis to the religious mentality of a later age.[27] It is very doubtful that the formation of this interpretation of patriarchal religion now in Genesis took place after the early years of the monarchy, and even more doubtful that it was the creation of a single writer.[28] Rather, the roots of this interpretation reach back to a traditio-historical event in which the northern and southern amphictyonies were united. The unification of the separate traditions of these groups followed soon after political union was effected, through the insertion of the Isaac traditions, which the proto-Josephites had brought from the south into the north, between the figures of Jacob and Abraham.[29] Since Isaac had originally been a southern figure who, through the agency of the newly arrived clans from the Egyptian oppression bearing his traditions, had already been unified with Jacob in the north, he provided a suitable link between the northern Jacob and the southern Abraham traditions. The effect of the creation of the genealogy and the political union which it presupposed was to fulfill the promise of numerous posterity for all of the tribes.[30] This is the reason the promise motif became the fundamental point of contact between the amphictyonic and patriarchal religions.

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[26] Cross, pp. 241ff.; also, Eissfeldt, "Jahwe, der Gott der Väter," *ThLZ*, 88 (1963), p. 487.

[27] *Verheissungen*, p. 14; see also, Leonard Rost, "Die Gottesverehrung der Patriarchen im Lichte der Pentateuchquellen, *VT* Supp., VII (1960). In analyzing the blessing of great posterity in the ancient Near East, Scharbert says, "Dagegen fehlt, abgesehen vielleicht von dem erwähnten Brief an Assurbanipal, das Vertrauen auf eine Vätern erteilte Verheissung; ganzlich unbekannt ist die Vorstellung von einem dem Stamm—oder Ahnvater gewährten Segen zugunsten eines Volkes." (p. 47.)

There is thus a nexus of related ideas that have as their origin the unification of the tribes into an amphictyony. On the one hand is the distinctive amphictyonic belief that the basis of man's relation to God is a covenant or oath, and on the other hand, the awareness that tribal unification would satisfy the basic need of the tribe for numerous posterity and hold out the possibility, as well, for the acquisition of land. It is thus understandable that in effecting a unification of the religious traditions of the tribes with those of the amphictyony, the basis of tribal religion is presented as an oath in which God swore to give numerous posterity and land to the tribes. In this way quite varied tribal religious traditions could be brought together around a central belief that fit perfectly into the structure of the amphictyonic religious mentality. It would then follow that those old tribal legends which expressed the need for a son or for posterity, or told of how a child was threatened, or of the infertility of a wife, would be used as points of contact for the later interpretation; these traditions either contained expressions of the need which was met by the amphictyonic union or stories which could be used as explanations of why fulfillment of this need had been so long in coming. Even the oath used by the later traditionists was, in a sense, an old tribal religious practice, and was thus not a glaring case of modernizing the old religion. Tribes had used such oath ceremonies in their relations with other tribes, and the tribesmen would have been familiar with the religious conceptions connected with them. The difference is only that now the oath has been made the form of the primary manifestation of deity and thus the way of conceiving of the God-man relationship. The traditionists thus give evidence of attempting to construct their interpretation of tribal religion with genuine old traditions and forms that were characteristic of it, while still reinterpreting it in such a way as to both unify the varied traditions and make them compatible with the view of the amphictyony.

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[28] Against Kurt Galling, Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels, (Giessen: Töpelmann, BZAW, 48 (1928), p. 64.

[29] The belief that Abraham and Isaac traditions were unified before the Isaac and Jacob traditions (Alt, KS, p. 56) is based on the supposition that the Isaac traditions remained alive in the south and were not brought into the north by the early Josephites. The idea that Abraham and Jacob were unified before either was joined with Isaac is based upon an exceedingly tenuous interpretation of the self-identification formula in 28:13 (cf. Andersen, "Der Gott meines Väters," p. 177). The sequence followed was Jacob-Isaac: Isaac-Abraham.

[30] That the unification into 12 tribes was considered the fulfillment of the promise of great posterity is evident from a sentence such as "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation." (46:3) The great numbers created by the later unification were of course read back into the period of the Exodus from Egypt.

What then can be said about the origin of other motifs such as the motif of "leading" which V. Maag believes is firmly rooted in patriarchal religion?[31] The idea of God's leadership as it is found today in the book of Genesis in close relation to the motif of the delayed fulfillment of the promise (esp. Gen. 50:19-21) is not derived from nomadic tribal religion but is an inference which emerged from reflection over the unification of the diverse traditions and peoples which constituted Israel. The natural corollary to the belief that God had made a promise to Abraham long ago that was being fulfilled in the present, is that God had led through each stage of the long journey that was now reaching its end. It is because of the strong conviction which arose during this period of unification that there had been a purpose and meaning in the diverse wanderings of the people in the past, that this so-called "nomadic consciousness" was so deeply impressed on the nation.[32] It is thus not necessary to explain this distinctive "nomadic consciousness" as having originated in the tribal period. This does not mean that the patriarchs never sought guidance from their deities. They most likely did, but it was more in the nature of divination than is the case with the idea of God's providential leadership as it now appears in Genesis.

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[31] "Die Hirten Israels."

By now it is clear that the Rendtorff-Zimmerli debate has been carried on between false alternatives quite apart from the question of whether the promise should be considered a part of patriarchal religion. The appearance and the promise in the oath ceremony cannot be separated and do not constitute a fusion of Canaanite and nomadic religions. The appearance of God to give an oath is rather a way of asserting that the power of God is being manifested through his word rather than through a miraculous event. It would thus seem that both Zimmerli and Rendtorff, by attempting to place more emphasis on one element than on the other have failed to grasp the significance of the form as a unity. It is incorrect to think of an "Ich-Geheimnis" of God concealed within the "I" in the self-identification formula since this separation arises out of an unnecessary distinction which Zimmerli makes between the "Ich-Geheimnis" and the manifestation of divine power in history; because the self-identification formula is actually a transformed oath formula, its intention is actually to suggest the power of God. So in this formula there can be no separation of the transcendent "Ich" of God and the manifestation of his power. On the other hand, the fact that God appears to swear his oath to man makes this oath more than a mere foreshadowing of the true revelation of his power in the historical sphere, as Rendtorff argues. The oath, as a manifestation of power, is already a revelatory event. But in this event the power of God is manifested through a word rather than through an historical action. The fact that the word is already a manifestation of power means that the advent of this word is itself an historical event which reveals the divine glory. It is thus impossible to juxtapose God's revelation through historical actions and his revelation through the word. Both are manifestations of power. Genesis is very clear, however, as to which of these forms of revelation is the most important. It is God's revelation through the word-event that has been made the foundation stone of patriarchal religion, and thus of the religion of Israel.

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[32] Comp. Gunkel, "Die Verbindung wird auch hier durch Wanderungen geschaffen. . . ." (p. LIII.)

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